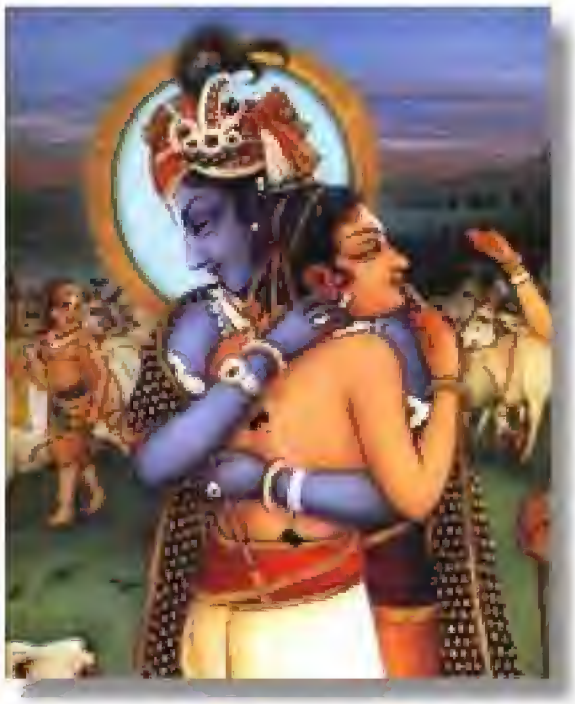
All Glories to Sri Guru and Gauranga

The Loving Search for the Lost Servant

by Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Deva Goswami Maharaja



Sri Krishna and Gopakumara

Preface

A Christian theologian predicted that Christianity is on the verge of a Copernican revolution. Prior to Copernicus, it was believed that the earth was at the center of the universe, and that the sun and other planets orbited the earth. Until recently, in the Western world it has been thought that Christianity was the central conception of divinity in the theistic universe. But as Western man has begun to gaze Eastward, he has discovered a plurality of theistic conceptions orbiting the Supreme Truth.

Accepting that plurality, we must also accept the accompanying gradations of theism, superior and inferior. As the planets are situated

according to their gravitational attraction for the sun, the varieties of theistic conception are situated higher or lower according to their attraction toward the Absolute Center. The Krsna conception of divinity is one of being irresistibly drawn in attraction toward the infinite center of all love, beauty, and harmony.

The infinite can make Himself known to the finite, and the divine agent through whom this function manifests is Sri Guru or the divine guide. His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Raksaka Sridhara Deva Goswami is an agent of divinity and a messenger of that supreme reality. He has reminded us that we are all "sons of nectar, " and that we shall have to "die to live," "dive deep into reality," and enter the "land of dedication." As much as we sacrifice ourselves in this plane, we shall become released from its influence and be drawn through dedication into the higher plane of reality where the divine pastimes "move in a crooked way." And there we will find the "hidden treasure of the Sweet Absolute" in the service of Srimati Radharani.

His Divine Grace has informed us that the heart's inner hankering for ecstasy, charm, and sweetness, leads it in the search for Sri Krsna - Reality the Beautiful. The Krsna conception of divinity is so irresistible that even Krsna Himself becomes overwhelmed by His own potency and is madly engaged in tasting His own sweetness, ecstatically dancing, and thereby distributing that sweetness to others.

In Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Goswami describes that while dancing at the Ratha-yatra, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu would sometimes fall in an ecstatic swoon and appear like "a golden mountain rolling on the ground." Srila Sridhara Maharaja describes that "In the agony of separation from Krsna, ecstatic eruptions of ecstasy flowed like lava from the heart of the Golden Volcano of Divine Love, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu."

And now in The Loving Search for the Lost Servant, we find that the Lord's heart is such that He also feels the agony of separation from His fallen devotees, and as they are engaged in searching for Him, He is also engaged in a loving search for His lost servants.

Bhakti Sudhira Goswami

Invocation

amnayah praha tattvam harim iha
paramam sarva-saktim rasabdhim
tad bhinnamsams ca jivan prakrti-
kavalitan tad vimuktams ca bhavat
bhedabheda-prakasam sakalam api
hareh sadhanam suddha-bhaktim
sadhyam tat pritim evety upadisati
harir-gauracandro bhaje tam

Here, in one verse, Bhaktivinoda Thakura has given the very gist of Gaudiya Vaisnava philosophy. He says, "We are not interested in the opinion of anyone ordinary: there is no value to any opinion other than what is revealed truth (amnaya)." Amnaya means revealed truth or scripture that is coming through a reliable source: the guru-parampara, a genuine succession of gurus.

And what do they say? They enumerate these facts: Hari is all in all (harim iha paramam). What is His nature? He is the master of all potencies (sarva-saktim). And He Himself is the ocean of rasa, ecstasy (*rasabdhim*).

And the jiva soul is not a direct part of Him, but a part of His potency (tad bhinnamsams ca jivan). Not a plenary portion (*svamsa*), but a partial portion (vibhinnamsa). Everything is a part of Hari, but svamsa means an avatara and vibhinnamsa means a part of His potency, tatastha-sakti. And by nature, some souls are engrossed in the external potency, and we find some in the lap of the internal potency (prakrti kavalitan tad vimuktams ca bhavat). By their very existence some souls are within the svarupa-sakti and some are outside the svarupa-sakti. Some souls are liberated and some are nonliberated (mukta and amukta). Everything is a part of Hari and has something in common with Him and something different (bhedabheda-prakasamsakalam api hareh). And the only means to attain Him is pure devotion, exclusive devotion (sadhanam suddha-bhaktim). Hari Himself, in the form of Gauracandra, is giving us the understanding that divine love is the highest goal of life (sadhyam yat pritim evaty upadisati harir-gauracandro bhaje tam).

Introduction

"Why did you stay away? Why have you been living away from home for so long? How was it possible for you? How could you bear My separation? You left Me, and you have been passing lives after lives without Me? Still, I know what trouble you took to return to Me. You searched for Me everywhere and went to beg from house to house, and you were chastised by many, ridiculed by many, and you shed tears for Me. I know all these things. I was with you. And now, after great trouble, you have again come back to Me."

The Lord's Loving Search for His Lost Servants: Great intensity is expressed here in a simple way. It is a mad search - an urgent campaign. With great earnestness Krsna comes to deliver His lost servants. Krsna comes to take us home.

In Brhad-Bhagavatamrta, it is written that once, as Krsna and the cows were returning from the Vrndavana forest at the end of the day, a boy had just attained spiritual emancipation and entered Vrndavana as a cowherd boy (*sakhya rasa*). Seeing His long lost servant, Krsna embraced him and both of them fainted in ecstasy.

All of Krsna's other cowherd friends were astounded, thinking, "What is this! Krsna has lost His senses by embracing this newcomer? How is it possible!" Then, as all of the cowherd boys looked on astonished, Balarama came to Krsna's relief and somehow managed to rouse Him.

Then Krsna addressed His friend with great affection: "Why did you stay away? Why have you been living away from home for so long? How was it possible for you? How could you bear My separation? You left Me, and you have been passing lives after lives without Me? Still, I know what trouble you took to return to Me. You searched for Me everywhere, and went to beg from house to house, and you were chastised by many, ridiculed by many, and you shed tears for Me. I know all these things. I was with you. And now, after great trouble, you have again come back to Me." In this way, Krsna addressed His long lost servant and welcomed him. And when Krsna returned home, He took the newcomer by His side to take prasadam. In this way, a new recruit is earnestly welcomed by Krsna Himself.

So the Lord's search for His lost servants is a loving search; it is not ordinary, but from the heart. And the Lord's heart is not an ordinary heart. Who can estimate what type of search He is engaged in? Although He is full in all respects, still He feels pangs of separation for every one of us, however small we may be. In spite of His supreme position, He has room for us in a corner of His loving heart. This is the nature of the infinite. Such an absolute autocrat, absolute good is Krsna.

An autocrat is not under law. It is not that if Krsna gives Himself to one, another will be lacking. The infinite is not like that; rather there is an infinite supply at His command. So He is the emporium of rasa (*akhila-rasamrta-murtih*). And He is searching for His lost servants, to bring them home.

Otherwise we have no hope. Our solace, our consolation in life, is that ultimately we are under the care of such a loving Lord. Krsna's friends think, "What do we care for others? We have our Krsna, our friend. " That sort of inner encouragement, that desperate encouragement, comes from within. "Krsna is there, He is our friend. What do we care about anything? We can take poison, we can jump on the head of that big serpent Kaliya, we can do anything. With Krsna behind us, what do we care? This sentiment is expressed by Bhaktivinoda Thakura in his Saranagati.

raksa koribo tuhun niscaya jani
pana korobun hama yamuna pani

"Fearless and confident of Your protection, I shall drink the waters of the Yamuna, whether they are poisoned or not.
"I am Your property. You must take care of me; You can't leave me."

kaliya-dokha korobi binasa
sodhobi nadi-jala badobi asa
bhakativinoda tuwa gokula-dhana
rakhobi kesava! korato jatana

"Although the Kaliya serpent's venom has poisoned the Yamuna's waters, I know that poison will not act. Your presence will cleanse the waters and so increase our confidence in Your protection.

Bhaktivinoda is now the property of Gokula, Your holy abode, O Kesava. Kindly protect him with care."
How are we to enter into such a loving relationship with the Lord? Through the grace of Sri Gauranga. One devotee has said, "If Gauranga had not come, how could we live? And who would inform us about our ultimate prospect in life?" We have such a great prospect. And yet, without Gauranga, who would have come to inform us that we have so much wealth within? And Sri Gauranga says, "You do not know, but you have such a great magnitude of wealth." His coming to inform us of our prospect is like the astrologerwho reads a poor man's horoscope and tells him, "Why are you living a poor life? You have immense wealth buried underground. Try to recover it. You are so great and your guardian is so loving and so high, and yet you are wandering like a poor fellow in the street? What is this! You are not helpless; it is not that you have no guardian. You have only to remember your merciful guardian."
In the Srimad-Bhagavatam (11.5.32), where the Kali-yuga avatara is mentioned, we find evidence of the advent of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. There it is said:

1. *krsna-varnam tvisa 'krsnam*
2. *sangopangastra-parsadam*
3. *yajnaih sankirtana-prayair*
4. *yajanti hi su-medhasah*

"In the age of Kali, persons of great piety and intelligence will worship the Lord as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He will appear in a golden form chanting Krsna's name, accompanied by His associates and entourage."
After that, there are two other verses about Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu:

dhyeyam sada paribhava-ghnam abhista-doham
tirthaspadam siva-virinci-nutam saranyam
bhrtydrti-ham pranata-pala bhavabdhi-potam
vande maha-purusa te caranaravindam

Srimad Bhagavatam (11.5.33) explains here, "That same personality who came as Ramacandra and Krsna has again appeared. He has come

to direct us to the real fulfillment of life. He is drawing the sweetest nectar from above for the sake of everyone. Meditate only on Him and all your troubles will be finished. He purifies all holy places of pilgrimage and great saintly persons by His touch and by His sankirtana. He draws the highest things down from the highest plane. And even Brahma and Siva, puzzled by His noble gift, will begin to praise Him. They will eagerly aspire to take shelter under His lotus feet in surrender. The pains of all who come to serve Him will be removed, and their inner necessities will be fulfilled. And He will take care of those who take shelter of Him; they will be given protection as well as everything they may need. In this world where mortality rules, where we are continually experiencing the undesirable changes of repeated birth and death, in this area where no one wants to live, a great ship will come for us and take us within, and carry us away from this unpleasant position. Let us fall at the feet of that great personality who comes to give us the highest nectar."

tyaktva sudustyaja-surepsita-rajya-laksmim
dharmistha arya-vacasa yad agad aranyam
maya-mrgam dayitayepsitam anvadhavad
vande maha-purusa te caranaravindam

"O Supreme Lord, You gave up the goddess of fortune and her great opulence, which is most difficult to abandon and is sought after even by the gods. In order to perfectly establish the principles of religion, You left for the forest to honor a brahmana's curse. To deliver the sinful souls who chase illusory pleasures, You search after them and award them Your devotional service. At the same time, You are engaged in a search for Yourself, in a search for Sri Krsna, Reality the Beautiful."

This verse generally applies to Lord Ramacandra, who left His kingdom, and after going with Sitadevi to the forest to discharge the duties designed by His father, chased after the maya-mrgam - the golden deer. Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, however, shows how this verse also applies to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He says that the word maya-mrgam means that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu ran after the souls that are enveloped by maya or misconception. The word maya-mrgam, when applied to Ramacandra, means that He ran after

Marici, who had taken the form of a golden deer. When applied in the case of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the words maya-mrgam anvadhavat mean "He chased after those souls who are in illusion in order to deliver them. He ran in pursuit of the fallen souls as a savior, to deliver them from maya or illusion."

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura has also given another interpretation: he says that dayitaya ipsitam means "it is desired by the beloved," that is, the search for Krsna. In this way, He identifies two qualities in the Caitanya avatara: He relieves the fallen souls, and He searches out Krsna in the mood of His beloved (*dayitayepsitam anvadhavat*). Inspired by the mood of dayita, His beloved, Srimati Radharani, He ran after the souls in bondage to deliver them. Here we find the scriptural reference, the seed of this conception. He is in quest of the lost souls, absorbed in a loving search for His lost servants.

And throughout the whole life of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His other self, Nityananda, it is very clear that They, being the Supreme Entity Themselves, are hunting after the fallen souls to deliver them. This will be the backbone of our conception of the Lord's loving search for His lost servants.

And it is also said:

yada yada hi dharmasya
glanir bhavati bharata
abhyuthanam adharmasya
tadatmanam srjamyaham

paritranaya sadhunam
vinasaya ca duskrtam
dharma-samsthapanarthaya
sambhavami yuge yuge

"Whenever and wherever religion declines and irreligion becomes prevalent, I advent Myself. In order to protect the saintly and punish the wicked, as well as to reestablish religious principles, I appear millennium after millennium." Here, Krsna says, "I come here now and then to help reestablish the scriptural injunctions, as well as to do away with the demoniac." These are the references from the scriptures describing how Krsna comes in search of His servants. By accepting

these statements as our starting point, we can see that He is always coming to this world to help the fallen souls, His own servants.
What is the position of the fallen souls? In Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja records Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu instructing Sanatana Goswami:

jivera 'svarupa' haya - krsnera 'nitya-dasa'
krsnera 'tatastha-sakti' bhedabheda-prakasa'
krsna bhuli sei jiva anadi-bahirmukha
ataeva maya tare deya samsara dukha

"The constitutional nature of the jiva soul is that of an eternal servant of Krsna; the jiva soul is a manifestation of divinity which is one with Krsna and different from Him. The jiva souls are the marginal potency of the Lord. Though in reality they are servants of Krsna, from time immemorial, they have been engaged in misconception, as exploiting agents." In order to deliver His lost servants, the Lord comes now and then to take them up to His own home.
In other religions we find many messiahs coming to help us to retrace our path from worldly consciousness back to God consciousness. Yet although we see this conception in other countries and other religious traditions, in India it is found in a most profuse and systematic way.
In Srimad-Bhagavatam (11.14.3) Krsna says:

kalena nasta pralaye
vaniyam veda-samjnita
mayadau brahmane prokta
dharmo yasyam mad-atmakah

"By the influence of time, the transcendental sound of Vedic knowledge was lost at the time of annihilation. Again, at the time of creation, I first inspired Brahma the creator from within his heart. And then, through Brahma, so many disciples were enlightened. They in turn enlightened their disciples. And in this way, the line of revealed truth descends from Me." And in Bhagavad-gita Krsna says:

imam vivasvate yogam
proktavan aham avyayam

vivasvan manave praha
manur iksvakove 'bravit

evam parampara-praptam
imam rajarsayo viduh
sa kaleneha mahata
yogo nastah parantapa

"First I instructed the sun-god Surya in this knowledge, and from Surya it passed to Manu, and from Manu to Iksvaku; so from the beginning of time, I am giving My tidings to others, transmitting the truth that I am the goal through this system of disciplic succession, generation after generation."

In this way, Krsna appears again and again to reclaim His long lost servants. And, as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Krsna is also tasting His own sweetness. When He wants to distribute it to the devotees, the cause is His ecstatic potency (*hladini-sakti*). When Krsna combines with His potency as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, He becomes the acarya. So Krsna says, acaryam mam vijaniyan: "Know that I am the acarya." His acarya-lila is His self-distribution, and thereby He is taking His lost servants home. His recruitment is to distribute knowledge about Himself and devotion for Himself, and then to take them home.

In Vrndavana, Krsna is tasting rasa within His own circle, and in Navadvipa, as Sri Gauranga with His group, He is tasting Himself and distributing that taste to others. His distribution and recruitment are one and the same. By distributing Himself He is drawing our hearts to Him, taking us home. The self-distribution of the Absolute is meant to draw us back home, back to Godhead, and in this way, the Lord is eternally engaged in His loving search for His lost servants.

First Chapter

Planets of Faith

The Gradation

"Just as in the tangible world there is the sun, the moon, and so many other planets, in the world of faith there is a gradation of planetary systems. We have to scrutinize the scriptures, take advantage of the guidance given by saints, and understand how the progress of faith to the highest plane is achieved by eliminating the lower planes."

Faith is the only means through which we can see, hear, or feel the higher world; otherwise it is all meaningless to us. To understand that plane, an inner awakenment is necessary. We can connect with the upper world only through a higher source. Therefore divyam jnanam, knowledge of the higher plane, is not ordinary knowledge; it is transcendental, supramental feeling and sense.

But to realize this, surrender is compulsory. After that, we may go on hearing and chanting, remembering and worshiping and praising the Lord, or rendering so many other kinds of service, but the first thing - the foundation of devotion - must be self-surrender. Otherwise nothing will be effected; our show of devotion will all be imitation.

We must sincerely feel, "I shall be faithful in my service to the Supreme Lord. I am meant for Him. I am ready to die to live. I want to live for Him only and not for fulfilling any separate interest. I want nothing less than the absolute. I want to be His completely." This sort of intensity is an indispensable necessity for a devotee. A devotee has to conceive, to feel, that he is meant for Krsna. He is not an independent entity; He is dependent on Krsna - the highest absolute center - and nothing else.

To identify with the interests of our family, society, or country is extended selfishness, but all false identification must be eliminated. We must be neither selfish nor entangled in extended selfishness. Rather, all sorts of foreign contamination must be eliminated from our conception of self. All outside demands must be canceled. Then we shall feel in our innermost hearts that we are connected with the whole of the infinite, the absolute.

And nothing external is required for our success. The only thing required of us is that we dismantle the ego's cover. The ego is collecting some foreign elements, but that foreign collection box must

be dissolved - finished - and then, in our innermost hearts' we shall find our connection with the fundamental plane of loving service to the organic whole.
Both enjoyment and renunciation are abnormal. They are two kinds of demons: enjoyment or exploitation, and eternal rest or renunciation. These two tendencies are our enemies. A higher, positive life is possible only when we become fully independent of both exploitation and renunciation.
Everything will help us if we can see it in connection with the center. On the other hand, the kind of exclusive renunciation practiced by the Sankarites and Buddhists is not recommended by our line. We are concerned to harmonize things so that everything will remind us of our duty towards the absolute, and encourage us to dedicate ourselves to Him.

prapancikataya buddhya
hari-sambandhi-vastunah
mumuksubhih parityago
vairagyam phalgu kathyate

anasaktasya visayan
yatharham upayunjatah
nirbandhah krsna-sambandhe
yuktam vairagyam ucyate
(Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu)

To neglect the environment, thinking that it is filled with undesirable material things, won't help us. That is not correct. Everything within the environment should remind us of the absolute. In that spirit we should move, thinking: "Accept me and connect me with the service of our Lord." When the environment is seen with the correct vision, everything will help encourage and excite us in our service to the center. We are living in an organic whole, a system. And that system is composed of the owner and the owned, the possessor of the potency and the different types of potencies (sakti-saktiman).

Emporium of Rasa

The Lord's potency is dynamic, and that dynamicism is always producing rasa or the flavor of ecstasy. The whole lila is producing ecstasy (anandam, rasam). Krsna Himself is the emporium of rasa (akhila rasamrta murtih...anandamaya vilasa). Dynamic movement is a necessity in His lila; it cannot be eliminated. And that movement is always producing a novel ecstasy which feeds every atom of the spiritual world. In that transcendental abode, Krsna is the center who attracts everything and enthuses rasa and anandam, ecstasy and joy within everything. This is the nature of the movement of the absolute. It is not static, but dynamic - filled with movement. And that movement is prati-padam purnamrtasvadanam: at every point, every step, it produces a new type of joy which is infinite. It is not the stale and sterile joy we find here.

This is the proper conception of the absolute. The organic whole, which is always working and moving, is full, and its fullness is ever-new. It is not standing or static. It moves in such a way that at every second, every minute, it is always producing new, unknown, infinite joy. And we can purchase that joy only by paying the highest price: self-sacrifice. That ticket is very valuable which can give us admission into the plane of automatic moving joy which is ever-new at every second. And the ticket is wholesale self-sacrifice.

That sacrifice is joyful, and one may taste that wonderful joy even here in this world, where at every moment everything is dying. It is give and take. If we want to gain something noble, we must also give. We must be generous in our dedication, and then we shall receive amply from that side. Wholesale self-dedication is the price, and in return, we shall be filled up with ecstasy: anandam budhi-vardhanam. We shall feel that we are in the midst of an ocean of joy. At present, we are searching after a joyous feeling - like one who searches for a glass of water in the midst of the desert. But by dedication, we shall find that we are in an ocean of joy whose soothing sweetness is increasing at every moment.

The quality of joy has variety, and it comes to help us in our serving attitude, so that at every moment we may feel new encouragement. So we have to inquire from a proper agent, follow his advice, and try to

understand how to improve our condition. At the same time, we should be conscious that the chance we have to render devotional service is rarely found. It is not very cheap. Therefore, we must utilize every minute, every second, every moment. We should be very much alert that a moment not be lost, that our attempt to dedicate ourselves may continue constantly without being interrupted. That stage of dedication is called nistha, and when we attain that stage, our taste is further improved and we will be more and more encouraged to go forward and make progress towards ultimate fulfillment.

Seven days to live

Sukadeva Goswami told Pariksit Maharaja that seven days of longevity is enough to achieve perfection. He said, "You have only seven days left to live; do you think it is a short time? It is enough time. What is all-important is the proper use of every second." What time we have in our hands is uncertain, but we must try our best to properly use every second. This must not be neglected. We should not think, "The future is before me; any time I like, I can engage in the profitable affair of spiritual life. "Not one second should be lost. Longfellow wrote:

Trust no Future howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act, - act, in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

The present is at our hand. We don't know about our future. We must try to use the time at hand to its best advantage. And how will our time be best used? In the association of saints and scriptures. Purity is to be measured by the unit of sacrifice. And not sacrifice to any partial interest, but sacrifice to the whole. The absolute whole has been shown to us as the emporium of rasa (akhila rasamrta murtih) - the absolute good, the autocrat, the designer and destiner of everything we see. Our ideal of sacrifice should be so high that we can give up even the corresponding results of sacrifice. Self-abnegation, or self-

surrender, is generally known as atma-nivedanam. However, atmaniksepa is a stronger word for surrender. It means "to throw oneself desperately towards the infinite." One must be desperate in self-sacrifice. In self-sacrifice we must be very careful not to aspire for any greater or extended selfishness, but to surrender only to the center. Sacrifice is meant for the center - Krsna - the all-attractor.
In realizing that position, we are concerned about two things - transcendental knowledge (sambandha), and the means for reaching the goal (abhidheya). If we realize these correctly, then the fulfillment of the ultimate goal (prayojana) will come automatically. We shall be very conscious about the center to whom we are dedicating everything. The object of our fulfillment (sambandha), and our dedication or purity of purpose (abhidheya) these two things are most important. This can be understood from the scriptures and the saints. And if we concern ourselves with the purest end and highest sacrifice, the end will come of itself. We are not to bother for any remuneration. We have only to do our duty and the remuneration will come. To whom we will dedicate ourselves and what we shall receive - these things should be discussed, thought out, meditated upon, and put into practice. In this way, we must try to live in the infinite. We must always stay engaged in the cultivation of infinite love and infinite beauty as recommended by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Ocean of Faith

Although the object of our heart's faith is infinite, still, some conceptions of Him have been given by the men of experience in the ocean of faith. In the ocean of faith, many have had their special experience, and that has been recorded in the scriptures. Through that we can approach the saints who stand like lighthouses to help us cross the ocean of nescience. But that must be bona fide and not merely a concoction or an imitation. It may also be possible to imitate the real thing by taking our mundane experience and thrusting it into the world of faith. So we must approach that plane very carefully through the line of reliable saints.

We must be careful to know the qualifications of a real saint. Their symptoms are given in the scriptures. And who is a disciple and what should be his attitude? All these things are given in the scriptures.
And faith is required in order to work in that substantial conscious world which is subjective. This is the most important thing that we have to remember: the infinite is subjective. It can guide us and be affectionate to us. All these things are to be reckoned with. He can guide us. The revealed truth stands on this foundation: We cannot approach Krsna by the ascending method, but He can descend to our level to make Himself known. We must understand this very fundamental and substantial point: He can come to us, and only through faith can we come to Him.
Sraddha - faith - is more important than calculative truth. The example of great souls is more valuable to us than our human calculation. The external, material, physical truth does not have much value. Rather, it is a false attitude of mind which is very strong. That physical truth should not be given greater respect than the intuitive practices of pure devotees; rather, the intuition of a pure devotee should be given preference to the calculations of truth made by ordinary men.
Faith has no connection with the so-called reality of this world. It is completely independent. There is a world which is guided only by faith (sraddha-mayam-lokan). Faith is everything there, and it is infinite and all-accommodating. In the world of faith, everything may be true by the sweet will of the Lord. And here, in the land of death, calculation is inconclusive and destructive in its ultimate goal; it has no ultimate value. It should be rejected. The knowledge that materialists come under, the fallible calculation of exploiting souls, has no value whatsoever. But in the world of the infinite, faith is the only standard by which everything moves.

svayam samuttirya sudustaram dyuman
bhavarnavam bhimam adabhra-sauhrdah
bhavat padambhoruha-navam atra te
nidhaya yatah sad-anugraho bhavan
Srimad Bhagavatam (10.2.31)

Here, Srimad-Bhagavatam says that just as in the vast ocean, when nothing else can be seen, the compass is the only guide, so in the

world of the infinite, our only guide is the footsteps of those great souls who have traveled on the path of faith. The way has been marked by the holy footsteps of those who have gone to the highest quarter. That is our only hope. Yudhisthira Maharaja also says that the real secret is concealed in the hearts of saints, as treasure is hidden in a mysterious cave (dharmasya tattvam nihitam guhayam). The broad line towards the truth is chalked out by those who are going to the divine world. And that is our surest guide. All other methods of guidance may be eliminated because calculation is fallible.

Guidance comes from the absolute infinite. And His guidance can come in any form, anywhere, any time. With this broad view, we should realize the meaning of Vaikuntha. Vaikuntha means "without limitation. " It is as if we are in a boat floating on the infinite ocean. Many things may come to help or hinder us. But only our optimistic good faith may be our guide, our gurudeva. The guide is Sri Guru.

nr-deham adyam sulabham sudurlabham
plavam sukalpam guru-karnadharam
mayanukulena nabhasvateritam
puman bhavabdhim na taret sa atma ha
Srimad-Bhagavatam (11.20.17)

In the infinite ocean we have boarded our small boat, the human form of life, and our destination is uncertain and inconceivable. But it is conceivable to our gurudeva (guru karnadharam). Our guru is our guide - the captain of the boat. And we must progress with sincere faith. We are trying to cross a horrible ocean with huge waves and dangerous sharks and whale-swallowing whales. It is full of danger. The guidance of saints is our only hope. We must depend on them. They stand like lighthouses in the infinite ocean to guide us to the land of faith. Faith means "hope in the infinite." Vaikuntha means "infinite." And sraddha means "good faith." Just as there is a place called the Cape of Good Hope, sraddha means surcharged with good hope in the infinite. Vaikuntha is infinite, and if we wish to draw the attention of the infinite, the only way open to us is sraddha.

By sraddha alone, we can attract the infinite. And when sraddha develops a definite form, after progressing through bhava, ecstatic emotion, sraddha becomes prema - divine love. Columbus set sail, and

after a long voyage, finally arrived in America; he reached the land of good hope. In the same way, with hope, sraddha, faith, we may, after crossing Vaikuntha, arrive in the highest plane of the spiritual cosmos. Sraddha is our light in the darkness.

Only sraddha can guide us when we are travelers in the infinite. "I have heard that this is the way to that place" - that spirit will keep our hearts enlivened. The definition of sraddha is given in the Caitanya-caritamrta: "Faith is the firm conviction that by serving Krsna, all other purposes are automatically served." No risk, no gain. Greatest risk, greatest gain. Krsna reassures us, "I am everywhere - there is no need to be afraid at all. Just realize that I am your friend. I am all in all, and you are Mine. To believe this is your only fare for the journey to the land of faith."

The Absolute Truth, the transcendental substance who is the object of our inquiry through faith, is endowed with all power and all consciousness. He is kind, benevolent, and sweet. His power is infinitely higher than ours, and we are infinitely smaller than Him. Our attitude should be that compared to Him, we are insignificant.

What, then, will be the real symptom of a disciple? Who is a real seeker of truth? What is the qualification of one who is searching after the truth - what is his attitude, his nature? And what will be the symptom of the guru, the guide?

In Bhagavad-gita Sri Krsna says:

tad viddhi pranipatena
pariprasnena sevaya
upadeksyanti te jnanam
jnaninas tattva-darsinah

"One can learn the truth only by submissively approaching and inquiring from those who have seen and experienced the truth. And by rendering service to them, one becomes initiated into transcendental knowledge."

What is required? Pranipat, submission, and seva, service. Then the inquiry will be bona fide; otherwise it is a false transaction: it may have no value. It may all be a waste of energy. Genuine faith does not allow us to think ourselves at liberty to do anything and everything. If

it is a real transaction, there must be some guidance from above. So sraddha, faith, is the most important thing for a devotee.
When one develops faith, he will do anything to approach the higher subjective realm. One who has faith wants to connect with that higher substance which is composed of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. Faith moves in consideration of existence, knowledge, and love. And when these three main points are realized, our existence is fully satisfied. Faith asks us to approach the higher world, not the lower. And to think, "In every way Krsna is superior, He is our guardian and well-wisher," is the basis of faith.
The rationalists are always searching with their scientific brains for different ways to utilize and command the things they have discovered in their research. But faith is concerned with a substance far higher in all respects than even the searcher himself. One who is an inquirer about a higher substance must inquire with what is generally known as faith.
Proper guidance in faith is also necessary, and that guidance is given by the higher plane. That must be the attitude of our inquiry or search if we are to be successful. So Bhagavad-gita advises: pranipat, pariprasna, sevaya - "Surrender, inquire, and serve." In the Upanisads it is said:

tad vijnanartham sa gurum evabhigacchet
samit panih srotriyam brahma-nistham

"To understand the Absolute Truth, one must approach a guru who is fixed in spiritual knowledge and well-versed in the scriptures. And he must approach the guru being prepared for sacrifice." This is the general instruction of the Upanisads.
Srimad-Bhagavatam (11.3.21) similarly advises:

tasmad gurum prapadyeta
jijnasuh sreyah uttamam
sabde pare ca nisnatam
brahmany upasamasrayam

"One seriously inquisitive to search for his highest prospect should take complete shelter of a guru who has deep realizations of the

Supreme Lord and the inner meaning of the scriptures. Such spiritual masters have left aside all relative considerations in favor of the supreme absolute consideration."

We should be very attentive to these things. We should try to understand through self-searching whether we are really approaching divinity through faith. We must also see to it that our faith is real. Proper faith and credulity are not the same. Whether one is a bona fide searcher with real faith or one whose faith is adulterated must be considered. And there are symptoms of real faith. We have to consult higher authorities to guide us, because faith is a most important thing. If we are searching for truth, we are dissatisfied with our present acquisition. We are taking a risk to jump into a higher prospect. We must therefore take guidance carefully. We must be attentive as far as possible. We are told that our present reason is not sufficient to help us; that more than reason, sraddha is needed, and sraddha also has its symptoms. Still, as far as possible we shall apply our reason.

When I first came to the mission, I thought, "The transcendental truths that I hear from these devotees do not come within the clutches of worldly intelligence, but still, when I want to throw myself into that association, I shall use my reason and intellect as far as possible, understanding that I am going to jump into something which will be beyond my control, beyond my calculation." So we must carefully understand what sraddha is, with guidance from saints, scriptures, and gurus.

Of course, even if we are going the right way, it is never certain that the path will be free from obstacles. Even if we are making progress, unexpected hindrances may trouble us and delay our advancement. Though we see many around us falling or retreating, we must go forward. We should have the conviction to think that although many began with us on the path and are now going back, we shall have to go on. We shall have to strengthen our energy and go forward alone if necessary. Our faith should be so strong that we have the conviction to go on alone if necessary and by the grace of our Lord cross whatever difficulties we find on our way. In this way we must make ourselves fit. We must develop exclusive devotion. Of course, we shall always try to find good association. Yet sometimes it may seem that there is no association, that we are alone. Still, we must go on and search out the beacon light of the truth.

Progress means eliminating one thing and accepting another. Yet we should be able to see that there are so many others who can help us in our progress in the line of dedication; we must go forward with our eyes open. And the scriptures describe many levels that we shall have to cross beyond in our progress. By elimination, the path of progress is shown from Brahma to Siva to Laksmi. At last Uddhava is shown to be superior to all. But it is his opinion that the gopis are the highest devotees. This is confirmed by Rupa Goswami:

karmibhyah parito hareh priyataya vyaktim yayur jnaninas
tebhyo jnana-vimukta-bhakti-paramah premaika-nisthas tatah
tebhyas tah pasu-pala-pankaja-drsas tabhyo 'pi sa radhika
prestha tadvad iyam tadiya-sarasi tam nasrayet kah krti
Sri Upadesamrta (10)

"There are those in the world who regulate their tendency for exploitation in accordance with the scriptural rules and thereby seek gradual elevation to the spiritual domain. However, superior to them are those wise men who, having given up the tendency to lord over others, attempt to dive deep into the realm of consciousness. But far superior to them are the pure devotees who are free from any mundane ambitions and are liberated from knowledge, not by knowledge, having achieved divine love. They have gained entrance into the land of dedication and are engaged there spontaneously in the Lord's loving service. Among all devotees, however, the gopis are the highest, for they have forsaken everyone, including their families, and everything, including the strictures of the Vedas, and have taken complete shelter at the lotus feet of Krsna, accepting Him as their only protection. But among all the gopis, Srimati Radharani reigns supreme. For Krsna left the company of millions of gopis during the rasa dance to search for Her alone. She is so dear to Sri Krsna that the pond in which She bathes is His very favorite place. Who but a madman would not aspire to render service, under the shelter of superior devotees, in that most exalted of all holy places?"

Go Deeper, Go Higher

In His talks with Ramananda Raya, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu repeatedly says, eho bahya, age kaha ara. Go further, go deeper, go higher! There are so many who consider their position to be the highest, who, achieving a particular stage, stop there. But we find in Sanatana Goswami's Brhad-Bhagavatamrtam how Gopa-kumara, beginning from the lowest stage of devotion, gradually makes progress through different levels, and at last comes to the Krsna conception in the mellow of friendship - sakhya rasa. There it is described how he gradually eliminates one stage and makes further progress to the highest stages of devotion.

As he progresses from one level to the next, everyone seems to be very helpful to him, but gradually, their company seems to him to be stale. At that time, a higher chance is given to him through an agent of divinity, and, leaving that plane behind, he goes to a new and higher plane. In this way, the progress of dedication is shown in Brhad-Bhagavatamrtam.

Higher Light

Just as in the tangible world there is the sun, the moon, and so many other planets, in the world of faith there is a gradation of planetary systems. We have to scrutinize the scriptures, take advantage of the guidance given by saints, and understand how the progress of faith to the highest plane is achieved by eliminating the lower planes. And whenever there is any doubt, we should consult with some higher agent in order to make progress.

Spiritual reality is eternal existence, complete consciousness, and ecstasy. Mere existence cannot fulfill us. Even our inner hankering and feeling, consciousness, is not sufficient. We require rasa and ananda, ecstasy, to give us fulfillment.

Spiritual realization is also of different types. We have to distinguish between different spiritual conceptions, and our choices improve as we dive deeper and deeper into reality. We must die to live. And the consideration of death is also deep, deeper, and deepest. The gradation of higher and lower is always there. If we are to progress, there must

be elimination and new acceptance. The duties that we find ourselves in the midst of may be left for higher duties.
In this way we must progress, while always consulting the saints and scriptures. They will guide us in the ocean of faith. Otherwise the spiritual world is unknown and unknowable. The Absolute Truth is known and knowable to a particular section, and they have given us direction. If we take advantage of that, then by the guidance of saints and scriptures we shall gradually eliminate our faults.
First we must eliminate this mortal existence Then, we must satisfy our reason, our consciousness. And finally, we must satisfy our heart. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu says that the heart is the most important thing within us. We should follow the direction of the heart. The highest fulfillment is fulfillment of the heart, not the fulfillment of consciousness, or the attainment of eternal existence. Eternal existence has no meaning if it is not conscious, and consciousness has no meaning if it does not give any fulfillment. So sat, eternal existence, cit, consciousness, and ananda fulfillment, ecstasy, are the three principles of our ultimate destination. And considering these as our goal, we shall progress further and further in our spiritual life.
In the Manu-samhita it is stated:

vidvadbhih sevitah sadbhir
nityam advesa-ragibhih
hrdayenabhyanujnato
yo dharmas tam nibhodhata

We can feel within our heart whether we are gainers or losers. That tasting machine is within us. As we progress in Krsna consciousness, our karma, our connection with this material world, will evaporate in no time, and spacious knowledge will come to satisfy us. At that time, we shall feel the object of our life everywhere (mayi drste 'khilatmani). When we can see that the fulfillment of life has embraced us, we shall see that everythingwithin the environment is helping us, everything is sympathetic to us from all sides. In that spiritual domain, everyone shall take interest in loving us. We may be careless about our own interest, but the environment there is more favorable and affectionate to us than we can even estimate, just as a child cannot estimate the extent of his mother's affection. In this way,

friends and home comforts will surround us, and with this realization we shall go back to God, back to home.

Second Chapter

The Environment

"We must try to look deeper and then we will find our friend; if we are liberal in our attitude towards the environment, we cannot but come in connection with the plane which is really liberal. Prahlada saw that Krsna is everywhere. And Krsna consciousness is commanding the whole. So we must not allow ourselves to be discouraged under any circumstances, however acute they may apparently seem to us. Krsna is there. If only we can develop the right vision, the smiling face of the Lord will appear from behind the screen. Krsna is beautiful, and He is eagerly awaiting to accept our services."

Devotion to Krsna means sacrifice - "die to live." By devotion to Krsna, our whole conception of mundane, self-centered, self-interested life will be finished totally.

sarvopadhi-vinirmuktam
tat paratvena nirmalam
hrsikena hrsikesa
sevanam bhaktir ucyate
Narada Pancaratra

"Pure devotion is service to the Supreme Lord which is free from all relative conceptions of self-interest."
In his Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu, Srila Rupa Goswami quotes this verse from the ancient Puranas. Upadhi means "all relative conceptions of self-interest." We must be totally free of all upadhis.
And Rupa Goswami also gives us a parallel verse describing bhakti:

anyabhilasita-sunyam
jnana-karmady-anavrtam

anukulyena-krsnanu
silanam bhaktir uttama

"Pure devotional service is the favorable cultivation of Krsna consciousness free from all traces of ulterior motives, such as karma, self-promoting activities, jnana, mental achievement, and so on." Bhakti, devotion, must be free from any fleeting desires (anyabhilasa), such as karma - the organized attempt for self-elevation - and jnana, the attempt to depend on our own ability, knowledge, and consciousness to reach the ultimate goal. To attempt to put one's own self as the subject, to become the judge of one's own fate - that is jnana. Here adi means yoga and other external things. These are all overcoatings (avrtam). In the soul proper, however, these elements are not found. The soul is an eternal slave of Krsna (krsna-nitya-dasa).
Mahaprabhu said: Jivera 'svarupa' haya - krsnera 'nitya-dasa': "Slavery to Krsna is the innate nature of the jiva soul."
In order to realize the absolute, we must come to the standard of slavery; it will take nothing less than that. We must submit ourselves as slaves to the play of His sweet will.
Once, the British government had to entertain the Persian Shah, the king of Persia. They invited him to England and tried to please him in various ways to gain his sympathy so that he would not be converted to the side of the Russian Czar. They showed him many things, and at one point, he was taken to the place where men condemned to capital punishment were beheaded. There the Shah was shown the place of execution. They explained to him how that was the place where so many great men, including even one king, Charles the First, had been beheaded. When that place was shown to the King of Persia, he asked, "Oh, bring someone there and behead him! Let me enjoy how it was done."
They were astonished. "What is he saying! For his pleasure, we shall have to murder a man? No," they said. "We cannot allow this; British law cannot allow that a man can be beheaded like this." The Shah said, "Oh, you do not understand the position of a king? I am a Persian king, and for my satisfaction you cannot sacrifice a human life? This is dishonor. Anyhow, if it is not possible for you, I will supply one of my own men. Take one of my attendants and show me how you execute people here in your country."

With humility, they submitted to him, "Your Highness, the law of our country cannot allow this. You may do it in your own country, but here, your men also cannot be murdered simply for the pleasure of a man." The Shah replied, "Then you do not know what a king is!"
This is the meaning of slavery: A slave has no position; by the sweet will of his master he may be sacrificed. Of course, in the lower material plane such things may be quite abominable and unthinkable, but we should understand that in the higher realm of divinity, in principle, such a degree of sacrifice is shown by the servants of the Lord. The depth of their love is such that they are prepared to sacrifice themselves wholesale, to die to live, for Krsna's slightest satisfaction or whim. But we should remember that whatever is His pleasure, He is the absolute good. So by such sacrifice we do not actually die, but live by gaining entrance into a higher plane of dedication.
In Srimad-Bhagavatam (7.5.23-24) it is written:

sravanam kirtanam visnoh
smaranam pada-sevanam
arcanam vandanam dasyam
sakhyam atma-nivedanam

iti pumsarpita visnau
bhaktis cen nava-laksana
kriyeta bhagavaty addha
tan manye 'dhitam uttamam

"Hearing, speaking about, and remembering Krsna, serving His lotus feet, worshiping His Deity form, praying, becoming His servant, cultivating His friendship, and surrendering to Him utterly are the nine processes of devotion. One who cultivates these nine processes of devotion, offering himself completely to Krsna, can easily attain the ultimate goal of life." What are the forms of sadhana? What are the means to attain krsna-bhakti? How can we revive our innate love for Krsna? We are told to hear about Him, to talk about Him, to meditate upon Him, to praise Him, and so on. But in his commentary on this verse, Sridhara Swami has explained that we should not anticipate what benefit we shall derive from sravanam-kirtanam, hearing or talking or thinking about Krsna. Rather we should pray, "May

whatever service I do go to my Lord. I am not the enjoying party - He is the sole proprietor." All these functions (sravanam, kirtanam etc.) will be considered devotion only if one condition is fulfilled; otherwise they may be karma, jnana, yoga, or anything else. They may even be vikarma, polluted misdeeds. One condition must be there to insure that all these different forms of devotional activity are actually bhakti: We are His property; we are not the owners of any wealth or property. We must think, "My Lord is the possessor and I am in His possession. Everything is His property."

Krsna says, aham hi sarva-yajnanam: "I am the only enjoyer of every action. You must be fully conscious of this fact." The stern reality is that devotion is not a cheap thing. Pure devotional service, suddha-bhakti, is above mukti, liberation. Above the negative plane of liberation, in the positive side, He is the only master. He is the Lord of everything.

He is the Lord of the land of dedication. We must try to obtain a visa to enter there. There, His sweet will is the only law. It is very easy to pronounce the word "absolute." But if we are to enter into the meaning of the word, then it must be recognized that His sweet will is all in all. To get a visa to the world of reality we must recognize this.

And this is especially true in Goloka, where complete surrender is demanded. In Vaikuntha there is some consideration of justice; for those who are entering there, some sort of lenience is given. But Goloka is very tight. Complete surrender is demanded in that place. Otherwise, the atmosphere there is very free. After one has been tested and the superiors are satisfied that the souls who have come there are wholly sacrificed, then we gain their confidence. And when it is seen that one is fully surrendered, there is complete freedom; one may do anything.

Whipping Krishna

And freedom there is so great that Krsna's mother Yasoda is whipping Him! If we inquire deeply into where Yasoda is taking her stand, we will come to the "die to live" plane. Yasoda can embrace death millions of times to remove a bead of sweat from the brow of her son;

she has so much affection for Krsna that she is ready to die a million times rather than find the sweat of labor on His forehead. And that consciousness is in the background of everything she does. This is why she is given so much independence as to be able to whip Him. Such is the play of the absolute.

If we have an idea of the infinite broadness and depth of the absolute, how can we value anything here? The Himalayas may be very big according to our standard, but from the standard of the infinite, the Himalayas are so small that they can't even be seen. This world is all relative. We must not allow ourselves to be cowed down by any events here. We must go forward in our march towards the truth. We may fail anytime, anywhere; it does not matter. It may be our master's will. Still, we have no other alternative than to try for His mercy, His grace.

This is our natural position. Even constitutionally, there is no possibility of living separately from Him. If, in ignorance, we sometimes think that it is possible to live separately from Him, that is only temporary insanity. To attempt to do so is only to create further disturbance, to be covered with ignorance.

While ignorant, we may be concerned for many things that have no value. But actually it is as in play: so many parties are playing - one must win, another must be defeated - but we are told that we must accept victory or defeat in the mood of a player. And everything is the play of Krsna. He is playing His lila. When we think that something is a great loss or gain, we are not seeing the lila of the Lord. Then we are outside the divine flow, we are not in harmony with the flow of lila. Then it appears that reality is not His lila, and we find some other reason for being, see some other objects, conceive of relative interests, and find loss and gain, victory and defeat, and so many other misconceptions. But everything is His lila, and that is nirguna, without fault. In that plane, everything is all right. Everything is perfect. Every inch of movement there is fully perfect.

"I Shall Curse You!"

Once, after the Kuruksetra war, the brahmana Utanka came to Krsna and said, "Krsna, I curse You!" Krsna said, "Why, My dear brahmana, do you want to curse Me?" Utanka said, "Because You are the cause of all the disasters of Kuruksetra. Because of You, so many widows and orphans are crying in distress. The bounds of their sorrow knows no end, and You are the cause."

Krsna answered, "You may have collected some power by your penances in sattva-guna, but that will all be finished when you curse Me. It won't produce any result in Me because I am situated in the nirguna plane." This is the nature of the nirguna plane. It is ahaituky apratihata: it is causeless and it cannot be checked - it is irresistible. The wave of the most fundamental plane is bhakti, devotion, where everything follows the sweet will of the center - nirguna. That divine flow is causeless and can never be opposed. We should try to take our stand in that plane. Bhakti is nirguna, beyond the influence of material nature, and it is ahaituki, causeless - that divine flow is eternally going on. And it is apratihata: bhakti can never be checked by anyone. It is irresistible.

This is the nature of the flow of devotion. Anyone who takes their stand in consonance, in harmony with that flow, will find the same thing: it can never be checked or given any successful opposition. This is the nature of bhakti according to Srimad-Bhagavatam (1.2.6):

sa vai pumsam paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhoksaje
ahaituky apratihata
yayatma suprasidati

Bhakti is the highest function of the soul (paro dharmo). Our duty here must have its origin in the plane of bhakti; we must be able to read and catch and utilize that flow. We must dance in the waves of that flow. Everyone's highest duty will be full submission to the unseen, undetectable causal power, which has no cause, no rhyme, no reason. It is automatic, eternal, and can never be opposed by any forces here.

And then only will we find our soul's greatest satisfaction. We will feel real satisfaction only when we come in touch with that most

fundamental harmonious wave. Then we can feel the highest ecstasy. That is bhakti.
So in coming to such a great idea of life, whatever obstacles we must cross are only small losses and gains, victories and defeats. We should not allow them to disturb our march towards the truth.

Bhagavad Gita

Krsna tells Arjuna in the Bhagavad-gita (2.47):

karmany evadhikaras te
ma phalesu kadacana
ma karma-phala-hetur bhur
ma te sango' stv akarmani

"Give your full concentration to discharging your duty and not to the result of your work. The result is with Me; all responsibility is with Me." Higher calculation is like that. The generals say, "March! Go forward. Onward! You have to go. You are my soldiers; whatever I shall ask, you must do. You may die and the victory may come afterward; that is not your concern. You are soldiers; many of you may be finished, but the country as a whole will gain." In this way, so many important lives may be sacrificed.
And as soldiers, we have no right to calculate whether we shall gain or lose in the long run. There are two things we must be very careful about. We shouldn't think that if we can't enjoy the fruits of our labor, then there is no reason to work. At the same time, we shouldn't think that we must get some share of the fruits. Remembering this, we should go on discharging our duty to Krsna. That is devotion, and that is the meaning of Bhagavad-gita.
Bhagavad-gita says, "You can't change the environment. If you want peace, you must regulate yourself according to the environment." The whole gist of Bhagavad-gita's advice is found here: Try to adjust yourself with the environment, because you are not the master of the environment. All your energy should be devoted to regulating yourself and not the outside world. This is the key to success in spiritual life.

Bhakti does not depend on the environment or on the dealings of others. It is ahaituky apratihata. Nothing can obscure that flow except our own ego. I am my own greatest enemy.

uddhared atmanatmanam
natmanam avasadayet
atmaiva hy atmano bandhur
atmaiva ripur atmanah

"We can elevate ourselves or degrade ourselves. We are our own best friend or worst enemy." No force outside can check us if we are sincere. Of course for beginners there is some concern about a proper environment for spiritual cultivation, but even that is also dependent on the nature of their sincerity, or sukrti: na hi kalyana-krt kascid durgatim tata gacchati. The assurance is given here by Krsna. He says, "I'll be there to look after you in any unfavorable circumstance. I am omniscient. And I am omnipotent also. So if anyone is directed towards Me, I'll look after him." And it has also been seen in history, in the cases of Dhruva, Prahlada, and so many others. Sincerity is invincible. Even obstacles may improve our position if we can take them in the right way. From a higher angle of vision it may be seen that everything is coming to help us.

Srimad Bhagavatam

tat te 'nukampam susamiksamano
bhunjana evatma-krtam vipakam
hrd-vag-vapurbhir vidhadhan namas te
jiveta yo mukti-pade sa daya bhak

Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.14.8) gives us a most hopeful suggestion for all stages of life: blame yourself and no one else. Maintain your appreciation for the Lord, seeing everything as His grace. At present we think our circumstances undesirable because they do not suit our present taste. But medicine may not always suit the taste of the patient. Still it is conducive to health. This verse is the highest type of regulation given by the sastra. If you can follow this law, then in no

time you will have a very good position. We must be careful not to blame the circumstances, but to appreciate that Krsna is behind everything. Krsna is my best friend; He is in the background of everything. Everything is passing through His attentive eyes. So there cannot be any defect there.

Even Srimati Radharani says, "He is not to blame. This long separation from Krsna is only the outcome of My fate. He should not blamed for this." Although outwardly it is admitted by all that He had cruelly left the gopis, Radharani is not prepared to blame Krsna. "No wrong can be found in Him," She thinks. "There must be something wrong in Me which has brought about this unfortunate situation." The competition between the groups of gopis in the service of Krsna is also harmonized in this way by Radharani.

Krsnadasa Kaviraja Goswami has explained this most important point. According to him, it is not that Radharani does not like any other party to serve Krsna in competition with Her, but She feels that they cannot satisfy Krsna as well as She can. And this should be noted very carefully. She knows that they cannot give proper satisfaction to Krsna, so She cannot appreciate their trying to take Her place. That is Her contention. She thinks, "If they could serve Krsna well and fully satisfy Him, I would have no complaint. But they can't. And still, aggressively they come to serve? I can't tolerate this."

The Brahmin Leper

Kaviraja Goswami has cited as an example of this sort of devotion a historical reference from the Puranas. There was once a chaste wife whose brahmana husband was a leper. She always tried her best to serve Him. One day, while she was bathing her husband at a holy river, he became infatuated with the extraordinary beauty of a prostitute by the name Laksahira. Her name indicated that she possessed the luster and beauty of a hundred thousand diamonds. The leper brahmana was irresistibly charmed by her.

Upon returning home, his chaste wife detected some dissatisfaction within her husband, and inquired, "Why are you so unhappy?" Her husband replied, "I felt some attraction for the beauty of that

prostitute. And I can't take my mind off her." "Oh. You want her?" "Yes. I do." "Then I shall try to make the arrangement."

Then, because she was poor, the chaste lady, although a qualified brahmana, began to go to the house of the prostitute every day and work as a maidservant. Although she was aristocratic by birth, she accepted the work of a maidservant without any remuneration. And she did her duties so diligently that she attracted the attention of the prostitute, the mistress of the house, who began to inquire. "Who cleans everything so neatly and beautifully?" And she came to know that a brahmana lady was coming every morning and performing many menial tasks. The other attendants said, "We tried to stop her, but she would not hear of it. She wants to meet you."

The mistress replied, "All right. Tomorrow, you may bring her to me."

Then, the next morning, when she was taken to the prostitute, the brahmana lady expressed her inner motive. "My husband is so attracted to you that it is my desire that you may satisfy him. It is my concern as his devout wife that he be satisfied, and this is his aspiration. So I want to see him happy." Then the prostitute understood everything and said, "Yes. Bring him tomorrow. I invite both of you to dine in my house."

This was intimated to the brahmana and the following day they came. Many dishes were prepared fitting the occasion. Two entrees were served. One was prasadam on a plantain leaf accompanied by Ganges water in an earthen pot - all pure vegetarian food. Side by side with that in gold and silver pots were so many meats and rich dishes. They were served with a very nice table arrangement and sitting places. Of the two kinds of foodstuffs, one was sattvik, pure, and the other was rajasik, filled with passion. Then, with folded palms, the prostitute invited the brahmana and his wife and indicated, "This is bhagavata-prasadam, and those are rich dishes prepared with meat. Whichever you like you may take at your sweet will."

Immediately the leper brahmana chose the prasadam, and began to take his meal. After he had finished taking prasadam, the prostitute said, "Your wife is like this prasadam - sattvik - and all these rajasik things - meat, rich dishes, gold, silver - this is like me. I am so low and your wife is the purest of the pure. Your real taste is for this sattvik prasadam. Externally, the meat is very gorgeous, but internally it is

very impure, filthy. And therefore you are repulsed by it. So why have you come here to me?"
Then the brahmana came to his senses. "Yes, I am wrong. God has sent a message to me through you. My fleeting desire has ended and now I am satisfied. You are my guru!"
Kaviraja Goswami has quoted this in the Caitanya-caritamrta. The chaste lady went to serve the prostitute. Why? For the satisfaction of her husband. So Radharani says, "I am ready to serve those in the opposition camp, if they can really satisfy My Lord. I am completely ready to serve them if they can really satisfy Krsna. But they can't. Yet still they have some demand. But I differ on that point. It is not that I am concerned that My share is being lessened. That is not My attitude. Whenever any unfavorable circumstances come, I think it is always coming from within Me (durdaiva vilasa); I don't find anything corrupt to be traced outside."
That should be the attitude of a true devotee of Krsna. With this attitude, we shall be able to see within ourselves that everything is ultimately part of the absolute good. Although it is not very easy, still, our energy should be devoted only to collect good will from external circumstances. In this way we should take care to see things in such a way as to purify our own position.

Deep Vision Reality

And so, we are encouraged by Srimad-Bhagavatam to look deeper. We must try to look deeper and then we will find our friend; if we are liberal in our attitude towards the environment, we cannot but come in connection with the plane which is really liberal. That is Krsna consciousness in its ultimate reach. If we look deeply into reality with this sort of vision, we will find our real home. Prahlada boldly met all adverse circumstances and ultimately he was victorious. The calculation of Prahlada's demonic father about the environment was falsified, but Prahlada's deeper vision saw reality correctly.
He saw that Krsna is everywhere. And Krsna consciousness is commanding the whole. So we must not allow ourselves to be discouraged under any circumstances, however acute they may

apparently seem to us. Krsna is there. As much as the circumstances appear to oppose us, it is really not so. If only we can develop the right vision, the smiling face of the Lord will appear from behind the screen. That is Krsna consciousness. Krsna is beautiful, and He is eagerly awaiting to accept our services.

God And His Men

Our inner wealth can be discovered only by the help of sadhu, guru, and scripture. Our vision should be that it is all nectar, but we have drawn a screen between the nectar and ourselves and are tasting poison, thinking that it is very useful. On the whole, we must think that no blame is to be put on others, and it is actually the truth. We are responsible for our disgrace, our fallen condition. And the path to self-improvement is also similar: we must learn to critique ourselves and appreciate the environment. Our appreciation should especially be for Krsna and His devotees, and then gradually everyone else. He has not given anyone the authority to harm us. If it appears that way, it is only superficial and misleading. That anyone can do harm to anyone else is misleading. It is only true on the superficial plane. Of course, this does not condone harming others or ignoring oppression, but from the absolute standpoint there is no harm. When we reach the highest stage of devotion, we shall see that everything is friendly and that our apprehension was wrong. It was a misconception.

Misconception: maya means "what is not" (mriyate anaya). When everything is measured from the standpoint of selfishness and not the universal interest - that is the cause of all our troubles. We must gradually realize, "My angle of vision was guided by selfish, not absolute, consideration. So I am suffering. But now I have come to understand that my interest is included in the absolute interest."

To parody an old saying, "A bad workman quarrels with his stools." According to our karma we produce the environment. What I am blaming was produced by my own karma. When I take food, stool comes as a natural reaction. It would be foolish to blame the stool for appearing. It is the effect of my having eaten. In the same way, I have acted in different ways, and the karmic result is my present

environment. So to quarrel with the reaction to our own misdeeds is a useless waste of energy.

The advice of Srimad-Bhagavatam should be our guiding principle under all circumstances. Whatever is coming to us is under His sanction, under His eye, so it cannot but be good. Everything is perfect. The only imperfection is within us, and therefore we should try with all our energy to do our duty. In no time, we shall find ourselves released from all troubles. That is the key advice of the Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Our Guardian's Eye

The environment is not dead - an overseer is there. Just as the sun is over our heads, every action is under our guardian's eye. This comparison is given in the Rg Veda: Om tad visno paramam padam sada pasyanti suraya diviva caksur atatam. We should approach any duty thinking, "My guardian's eye is always vigilantly watching over me, seeing everything I am doing, and whatever is happening to me. I need not worry about this environment or circumstance."

So Bhagavatam says, "Don't worry about the environment. Do your duty. Concentrate fully on what you are doing, and in no time, you'll be relieved of the black box of the ego and will join in the universal flow of dancing and chanting, singing and rejoicing. You will gain entrance into the lila or pastimes of the Lord."

We are all suffering from separate interest, clash and reaction, good and bad, pleasure and pain, happiness and distress, but there in the spiritual domain, everything is conscious and filled with happiness. So not only total self-forgetfulness is required, but the whole good will of the Lord should be invited. We shall merge in the flow of the good will of the Lord. That is Vrndavana.

Our guardians say: "Do this," and according to our capacity we shall try to execute their order. And accepting that what they say is really coming from Krsna, the more we are able to follow their instructions, the more benefit we shall accrue. Srimad-Bhagavatam, Bhagavad-gita, the Vedas and Upanisads, and so many agents who represent divinity are all helping us go back to our real home. At present we are living in

different stages of the consciousness of separate interest, but our guardians are all trying to take us into that higher plane of dynamic movement, lila, to enter into the pastimes of Krsna.

Enemy Ego / Real Ego

Here, everything is but a reflection of the perfect world. Originally everything is there, including all types of service, but here we have only a perverted reflection. Leaving this variegated world behind, we should not attempt to merge into non-consciousness so that we won't be able to feel any pleasure or pain. At present we are under the influence of our enemy ego. Real ego exists in the spiritual world. All experience is found there, but it is full of beauty and charm.
Krsna consciousness means full-fledged theism. This means that we can have a relationship with the infinite up to consorthood. Everything that we need to help us and lead us in the right direction is really to be found in the spiritual world in its purest and most desirable position. What we find here is only a shadow, a black imitation. But reality means full-fledged theism - Krsna consciousness - where the infinite embraces the whole finite. The infinite comes down to welcome, to fully embrace the finite - that is Vrndavana. And this is full-fledged theism: through Krsna consciousness, one negligent part of the finite may experience the blissful embrace of the whole infinite. And in Vrndavana, not a corner is left neglected. Every grain of sand, every blade of grass, is well-represented there with personality. Here, what to speak of a particle of sand, so many things are insignificant. But in Vrndavana, everything is cared for. Nothing is ignored. That is full-fledged theism. This is explained in Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.21.5):

varhapidam nata-bara-vapuh karnayoh karnikaram
bibrad vasah kanaka-kapisam vaijayantin ca malam
randhran venoradhara-sudhaya purayan gopavrndair
vrndaranyam sva-pada-ramanam pravisad gita-kirtih

Sukadeva Goswami reveals something astounding to Pariksit Maharaja. When Krsna enters the forest of Vrndavana by the touch of

the soles of His lotus feet, the earth feels the pleasure of His embrace - the personal embrace of the Sweet Absolute (vrndaranyam sva-pada-ramanam). This is inconceivable! By the touch of the holy feet of Krsna, the sand and the earth feel the pleasure of consorthood! Glorified by His cowherd friends, He enters the forest of Vrndavana, and the earth, the forest, and everything that comes in connection with Him feels a higher, closer sense experience of pleasure to the happiest degree.

Consorthood

In Vrndavana, the earth feels the mood of consorthood. So the vrndavana-lila of Krsna is so wonderful that even Brahma, the creator of the universe, said, "How can we understand You, my Lord? I know something about my Lord Narayana, who is near to me. He and I have some direct connection so that I may discharge my official duties. But You have come within my circle and I can't understand You. What is this?" He tried his best to test Krsna by kidnapping His cowherd boyfriends and calves, but he was astounded to find that, "Although I have removed them, everything is as it was before; Krsna is still surrounded by His friends and their calves, engaged in their pleasure pastimes. So He is infinite. Even as the lord of the universe, my interference could not disrupt anything under His control. By His own sweet will He conducts His play. I tried to test Him, but now I am bewildered by His inconceivable potency. I could not understand that although an apparently human cowherd boy, He is nonetheless the supreme most, higher than even Lord Narayana. " He pleaded with Krsna, "Now I have come to my senses; please forgive me, my Lord." What use is a particle of our intelligence? How much can it measure the infinite? Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, "Don't try to apply your brain to the infinite. The brain is not a unit for measurement in that plane. Your intellect is canceled by the infinite. Try to measure it only by feeling, by taste, by heart - the brain will be your enemy. It will always deceive you in its measurement, and that will disturb you and limit your progress."

Only faith can help us. Otherwise nothing can reach that plane. We can reach the sun or moon only with the help of advanced technology. We can't reach out and touch it with our hand or with a long stick. In the same way, to connect with the highest reality, faith alone can help one. Faith is the most spacious medium. But even that is very meager in consideration of the high thing with which you would like to connect, the supreme cause of all causes.

We are teeny souls. How much can we accommodate with our faith? How wide and how broad is our faith? What can we catch within our faith? What we are seeking is infinite, and we are very much afraid; "Oh, if I rely on faith, something may go wrong. I may be deceived." But within our teeny hearts, how much faith can we contain? Only by analogy with the sky or the ocean may we understand anything about the infinite, but what is that in comparison? Nothing.

And what is the infinite? That from which everything is coming, by which everything is maintained, and into which everything is ultimately entering; the all-comprehensive, all-permeating, all-controlling, all-attracting, all-feeling Absolute.

So everything is all right with the infinite and the environment. We have only to correct ourselves, to adjust ourselves. This is the conclusion - "Try to adjust yourself; everything is all right with the environment. We must leave everything to the Supreme Lord and conduct ourselves accordingly." That will bring us real peace and progressive realization in spiritual life.

Third Chapter

Beneath the Loving Eye of God

"Neither existence nor consciousness are complete in themselves. Consciousness alone hankers for ecstasy. And existence without consciousness is to exist with no purpose. But when existence is endowed with consciousness, it can search for its own good: ecstasy."

Vishnu Padam

"The divine feet of our holy Lord are like the vigilant eye of a grand guardian hanging over our heads like the sun, and we are living beneath the glance of that vigilant eye. We shall always try to live not in the objective but in subjective relativity. We should think, Above my consciousness is Superconsciousness; the vigilant guardian's eye is always watching over me."

The Rg Veda mantra says: Om tad visno paramam padam sada pasyanti suraya diviva caksur atatam: The divine feet of our holy Lord are like the sun above our heads. His holy feet are like the vigilant eye of a grand guardian hanging over our heads like the sun, and we are living beneath the glance of that vigilant eye.

We are interested not in objective, but in subjective reality. We shall always try to live not in objective but in subjective relativity. We should never think, "Under my feet I have firm ground to stand on; I am big. I shall stand erect." Rather we should think, "Above my consciousness is superconsciousness; the vigilant guardian's eye is always watching me. I am living under the glance of that eye." Our support comes not from below, but from above. He is our shelter. We are hanging from that substantial upper world wherein He resides; our support is found there. We must always be conscious of that.

This is a principle mantra in the Rg Veda. Before anyone approaches a new duty, he should think about his own position. We have been instructed by this verse from the Vedas to think in this way: "You are under the vigilant eye of your guardian, and that great eye is as living as the sun; its glance is just like that of the sun which is over your head. Like a light that can pierce through to see anything within you, His piercing glance is upon you." With this understanding of identity we should approach our duty. We are never encouraged to think that we stand firmly here on solid earth, and that on the basis of a strong position, independent of His grace we can carry out our dharma.

Actually, in our subjective relationship with divinity, we are just like the rays of the sun. Where do the sun's rays stand? They stand on the sun - that is their source. In the same way, we should think that our stand is in the realm of divinity; we are so many particles of

consciousness, and our stand, our motherland, is that conscious area. God consciousness means Krsna consciousness. We are consciousness and we are meant for Krsna consciousness - that is our relationship. We should always be conscious of this fact. We are connected with Krsna consciousness. We are members of the Krsna conscious world. And we have come to wander in the foreign land of material consciousness, mayika misconception, thinking that we are units of this material world, but it is not so.

We are units of the conscious world - the Krsna conscious world - and somehow we have come within this material conception of existence, the world of matter. Matter is what we can exploit, the objective side of reality, and the subjective side is the element we should revere. Our relationship with the subjective is that of reverence and devotion to the higher entity, and not that of exploitation or enjoyment. Real enjoyment, divine enjoyment, comes from service - not from exploitation.

We must understand all these basic principles. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja once remarked to me that although the engineers in New York have built so many skyscraper buildings that will stand for ages, they were never mindful of how long their own bodies would last. The buildings will stand for a long, long time. But those who will live in those buildings have forgotten how long their bodies will stand. In this way people are very busy on the objective side, but they are neglecting the subjective values. Their concern is with objects and not with who will use them. They think that no subjective cultivation is necessary for the user of the objective world. In this way they give all importance to the objective side, neglecting totally the subjective side.

Consciousness Rays

Our real position is like the rays of the sun. A sun ray touches the earth. Where is its home? A sun ray comes to our plane and touches the hills and the water, but what should be considered as its home? Necessarily the sun, and not the earth it touches. Our position is similar. As rays of consciousness, we pertain not to the material

world, but to the conscious world. Our home connection is there: in the sun - the spiritual sun.

We are advised by the Vedas to consider: "Although you have been cast in a hole of this earth, still your native soil is the conscious sun. You emanate from there, you are sustained from there, and your prospect is there. You have to conceive of reality in that way. Because you are conscious, your home is the source of consciousness. Whether you are bird or beast, whether you are in the mountains, earth, or water - wherever you are, whatever position you hold, your source is in consciousness, existence. Your source is in consciousness just as the rays of light have their home in the sun."

The Vedas tell us: "You are not a child of this soil. You may be a captive here, but this is not your home; this is a foreign land. All your hopes and prospects can be supplied from that higher soil, because your nature is of that order. Your food, your sustenance, your everything should be made of that higher stuff. But what is found within this material world is all poison to you."

Again, although what is pertaining to consciousness is the immediate, nearest realization of our nature, if we are to go deeper into the conscious world, we shall find something more substantial. If we cross beyond the vision of light-consciousness, we shall find the real necessity of our existence: happiness - ecstasy - and divine love. After establishing ourselves in the realm of consciousness, we must establish ourselves in the realm of divine love, ecstasy and beauty. We must search for our fortune there, and never in this material world. Ecstasy is above light; transcendental mellow is above consciousness. Beauty and charm are above mere consciousness and understanding. Feeling is not complete in itself. Feeling must be for something. So the fullest conception of a perfect thing is something which is full in beauty or ecstasy. Mere existence or consciousness alone cannot be the highest perfection. Ecstasy is the most perfect thing. Ecstasy, divine love, and beauty presuppose consciousness and existence.

Spiritual reality is composed of three substances: sat, existence, cit, consciousness, and ananda, ecstasy. And of these three, ananda or ecstasy is the final conception of spiritual substance. Ecstasy can exist by itself. Neither existence nor consciousness are complete in themselves. Consciousness alone hankers for ecstasy. And existence without consciousness is to exist with no purpose. But when existence

is endowed with consciousness, it can search for its own good: ecstasy. Ecstasy is an independent and concrete substance. Both existence and consciousness are subservient to ecstasy.
And one who realizes the ecstasy of Krsna consciousness becomes free from this mortal world. When one realizes that, he need not be afraid of anything. He need have no apprehension from any fear that can arise here in this material world where there is the constant threat of nonexistence. Here in the material world we not only have no fulfillment, but our very existence is also at stake. At any moment we may be devoured by nonexistence.

Dive Deep Into Reality

But to come to the plane of ecstasy, we shall have to dive deep into reality. We must not be satisfied with the formal, the superficial. If we concentrate our attention on the outward form of a thing, neglecting its inner substance, then we shall find that we are looking in the wrong place. When Mahaprabhu would look at the Deity of Jagannathadeva, apparently it seemed that His aim was fixed on the same thing we see when we look at the Deity. To our vision, however, the Deity of Jagannatha is only a doll made of wood. And yet when Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu would fix His eye there, He would shed tears of joy, and His tears flowed in an incessant current. Where is His vision of reality connected? What we see as a wooden doll, He sees in a completely different way. And just by looking at that, an incessant current of tears pours from His eyes. Where is His connection with reality located? He is viewing things from the opposite side, from the subjective world.
So how should we approach the Deity? When we have a look at the Deity, what should be our attitude? The Deity form of the Lord is not a mundane thing, and so we should learn the proper way in which to see the Deity. And more than this, we must try to look at this from the other point of view. As we are trying to see the Deity, He sees us. He has come down to help the fallen souls in this material world, and He has come down in such a way as to take us up to His domain.
Ramanuja has classified the expression of the Supreme Entity in five forms: para, vyuha, vaibhava, antaryami, and arcana. Para, the central

conception of the highest entity; vyuha, His extended self in different functions, in different figures; vaibhava, His appearance in this mundane plane as avataras like Matsya, Kurma, and Varaha; antaryami, His presence in every heart and every soul, every conscious unit; and arcana, His appearance in the plane of our physical perception as the Deity. In His form as the Deity, I can touch Him, I can see Him, and I can serve Him. In a concrete form He has come to help our understanding.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu looked at the Deity and His eyes were flooded with tears. It is not that His eyes were fixed upon the superficial characteristics of wood when He saw the Deity form of Lord Jagannatha, but He was connected on a vastly higher level with Krsna consciousness. His thoughts were deep with Krsna consciousness. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu thought, "Lord Jagannatha has come here and is making arrangements to deliver millions of fallen souls, especially by extending His own prasadam to one and all in great magnitude. His magnanimous presence has manifest here for the relief of this world."

And Krsna consciousness is the highest relief work. Our guru maharaja used to say that there is a famine of krsna katha. There is a famine at present. But is the world suffering from a lack of food? No. The world is suffering from the famine of Krsna consciousness, Krsna talk, krsna kirtan. So we must try to open offices of food distribution so that we may distribute the food of Krsna consciousness to all souls. Mahaprabhu said "Whoever you come across, talk of Krsna (yare dekha, tare kaha 'krsna'-upadesa)." Give them the food of Krsna consciousness, krsna katha. The world is filled with famine-stricken people. We must distribute food, give the life and breath of Krsna consciousness to whomever we meet by speaking about Krsna.

That was the feeling of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, and Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja carried that out in the West. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta used to say, "I do not admit any other conception of famine. The only famine is that of krsna katha, krsna smrti, Krsna consciousness." With such seriousness he conceived of our necessity for Krsna consciousness.

Krsna is of vital importance to our existence. Only Krsna can give us vitality. And as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Krsna Himself distributes Krsna consciousness. Vasudeva Ghosh says, therefore, "Sri Gauranga

is my life and soul, my only vitality. If Gauranga had not come, how could I live? (yadi gaura na ha'ta tabe ki haita kemane dharitam de.) By His grace I have tasted such valuable food that without this, my life would be completely impossible."

Krsna consciousness is the vitality of vitality. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada did his best to give Krsna consciousness to the people of India, and Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja distributed that vitality all over the world. It is by their grace and by the grace of Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself that so many have come to Krsna consciousness. Haridasa Thakura once told Caitanya Mahaprabhu, "By Your chanting of the holy name of Krsna, both the animate and inanimate world has been supplied with the food of Krsna consciousness. Whatever position they may occupy, their life is fulfilled. I heard of how, when You traveled through the jungle and chanted and danced, the elephants and tigers also danced and chanted the holy name of Krsna. What wonder, then, should there be if I say that the stones and trees have also attained their highest end - Krsna consciousness - when You are chanting. What an intense degree of Krsna consciousness has been produced here by Your chanting!"

But in order to chant the holy name of Krsna, something is required from our side also. Amanina manadena kirtaniyah sada harih. We should resort to kirtana always, but our attitude should be as Mahaprabhu recommends: Trnad api sunicena taror api sahisnuna amanina manadena. Our attitude should be one of humility, and if we think that we are being done wrong, still we should be patient, and under no circumstances should we work for our own position and prestige; that should not be our aim.

When the lower stands against the higher, offense arises. That tendency should be shunned. Primary education is also education, but that should not compete with higher education; we must be careful about that. At the same time, the differentiation between higher education and lower education must be genuine. Still, primary education must not be thought of as the highest education. That will be dangerous. There is a saying in Bengali - alpavidya bhayamkori - "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." We must be careful about that, otherwise our attitude will be suicidal. The question of offense arises whenever primary education stands against higher education. That sort of assertion is offensive.

Slow and steady wins the race. Our march towards the infinite is a long journey, not a journey to be finished within a few hours, a few days, or a few years. And we have to adjust accordingly. It is not that we shall run quickly to make progress and then stop and sleep. It is a long way we shall have to go. We will only be successful if we develop humility - trnad api sunicena. We should not create any circumstance that invites resistance. Still, if any resistance unexpectedly approaches us, we should try our best to forbear. And we must always be conscious that our guardian's eye is always over us, eager to help us in our campaign. We are not alone. We may go on confidently: there is a person above us to redress the wrong that may be shown to us, so we should not take the initiative.

We must not allow any ulterior purpose or temptation to induce us to give up our search for Sri Krsna. Let the satisfaction of guru, Gauranga, Krsna, and the Vaisnavas be our only objective. Let no other element enter upon our path. Our purity of purpose must always be very scrupulously maintained. We should think, "Alone I shall go on with my duty. I won't be always searching for someone to come and help me. Let them do their own duty. This is my duty."

With this attitude we shall go on. With this sort of adjustment our concentration may become more intense, our confidence in Krsna will be increased, and our duty will be pure and clear. We should be conscious that hindrances and obstacles are almost sure to attack us, but we must deal with them with humility and forbearance. So this life is not a life of comfort.

Holy Feet of Vishnu

But in order to develop this kind of humility and forbearance, we must learn to see the Lord's hand in everything. And therefore the Vedas tell us to remember that the glance of the Lord is always upon us. Om tad visno paramam padam sada pasyanti suraya: We are asked to see the holy feet of Narayana as we see the sun in the sky. Why the sun? The sun is described as pradarsaka: the seer, the witness. Apparently we see the sun, but really the sun helps us to see. The holy feet of Visnu means the lowest part of Visnu - yoge vidhayam yasya vidyate

kvacit. His lower part to us is the beginning of realization for us. The beginning of realization is to think that God is always seeing us. As the sun helps us to see, Visnu's holy feet are like the sun. So we should try to always see everything by the rays of the holy feet of Visnu.

From another point of view, His holy feet are like a big eye spread over the sky. He sees everything. Whatever we do, our guardian's vigilant eye is over our head like the sun. Before we enter into any action we must remember this Vedic mantra. The Rg Veda is the first Veda and this is the most important mantra of the Rg Veda. The brahmanas of the Vedic school are told that whenever they do any service pertaining to religion or varnasrama, they must first remember this Rg Veda mantra: "Visnu's feet are over you and they are looking at you like a guardian's vigilant eye. Always remembering this, do your duty."

If you always remember that He is seeing everything you do, you can't do anything wrong. You won't be able to venture to do anything offensive to the Lord as long as you remember that through everything, the searching eye, the all-knowing, omniscient eye of the Lord is always watching over you. This remembrance cannot but purify your heart and understanding and the whole of your mental system, and help you to approach divinity in the right way. It is not that you can do anything and everything without His knowing; not that you are the master wire-puller of both your own life but of the world; not that you are going to exert your mastery, your influence over the environment in a selfish attempt. Always remember that one big eye is spread over your head seeing everything like the searching light of a strong x-ray. What even you do not know about yourself, He knows. What is underground in the innermost subconscious region of your heart, He can also see. If you remember this as you move and live, you cannot but be purified. Just as cancer can be removed from the body by a laser ray, the whole disease of material existence will vanish from our hearts by this purifying influence of the divine rays of light from the holy feet of Visnu.

Fourth Chapter

Lord of the Cows

The King Of The Cows

"May that lord of the cows be satisfied by us. Who is Indra when compared to Krishna? Krishna is the master of Indra. And yet He has appeared as the master of cows; the Supreme Absolute Truth has accepted a simple position as the keeper of cows. Superficially, He is a mere cowherd boy. But let that cowherd boy, who holds within Him the power of controlling the whole universe, be satisfied with us. We want to worship that Lord who has taken the humble position of the king of the cows."

deve varsati yajna-viplavarusa vajrasma-varsanilaih
sidat-pala-pasu-striyatma-saranam drstvanukampy-utsmayam
utpatyaika-karena sailamavalo lilocchilindhram yatha
bibrad gosthamapan mahendram adabhit priyan na indro gavam
Srimad-Bhagavatam 10.26.25

The very gist of the Govardhana lila, the very substance of the pastime, is represented in this verse. The milkmen in Vrndavana used to observe a sacrifice to satisfy the king of heaven, Indra, at whose command the rain, clouds, and other subtle elementary powers move. The main wealth of the cowherd men is the cow, and the cow's main food is grass. Only rain can produce grass, and so the cowherd men used to perform sacrifice to satisfy the subtle power who is supposed to be in command of natural substances like rain.

By satisfying Indra, favorable rains would come and there would be sufficient grass. The cows could then graze easily on the grass and generate milk profusely. The gopas, the cowherd men and their families, used to make different preparations from the milk, sell them in the marketplace, and in that way earn their livelihood.

As the grazing ground in one place was finished, they would move from one forest to another. Only for the purpose of obtaining grass for

the cows, Krsna's father Nanda Maharaja and the cowherd men would wander from one place to the next. In this way, they lived sometimes in Vrndavana, sometimes in Nandagrama, and sometimes in Gokula.
Once, Krsna wanted to assert Himself and modify the worship of Indra. He wanted to establish His own domain, Vrndavana, in its pristine glory.
Although He was only a boy, He was a boy of extraordinary capacity. He was only seven years old. But in the Padma Purana it is said that the development or growth of special personalities is one and a half times that of ordinary persons. Although Krsna was only seven years old by ordinary calculation, He was eleven according to general calculation.
Krsna said, "Why should we perform this sacrifice to Indra? We have a direct concern with Govardhana Hill and not Indra." He announced this idea to the gopas, and somehow, willingly or reluctantly, the gopas submitted to the advice of Krsna. Nanda Maharaja was influenced by affection for his son, and, because he was the king, he told them, "This time we shall worship Govardhana Hill and not Indra."

Indra Insulted

And so the gopas, the milkmen of Vrndavana, followed Krsna's advice - some reluctantly and some willingly - and they began the sacrifice for Govardhana Hill. This news reached Indra, who thought to himself: "A boy of special capacity lives there. Now He has taken the leadership of Vrndavana and stopped this ancient sacrifice to me. For a long time it was the tradition of the gopas to perform sacrifice to satisfy me, and now one boy is the cause of stopping my sacrifice!" He was very much enraged. Indra ordered the clouds and the wind and the lightning to attack the residents of Vrndavana.
According to Vedic understanding, all the elements are personified. In ancient days, the Aryans and Rajarsis, elevated human beings and great sages, used to see everything as persons. They saw everything in a personal way. They thought of the creepers, the trees, and everything else in the environment as persons. They understood that they were all

persons who, according to karma, are wandering through the different species of life.

Once I was asked by a professor of biology about alternatives to Darwinian evolution. I advised him that evolution from consciousness to matter may be understood on the basis of Berkeley's theory. Whatever we think of is really part of our consciousness. And consciousness means person. Everything that we may be conscious of is a person. We may think of the wind as an inanimate object, but it was thought of in the Vedic line as a person. Lightning, wind, clouds, and rain are all persons. Whatever we consider to be elementary matter, gross and subtle, were all considered by the ancient seers of the truth to be persons.

Indra commanded the wind, the clouds, and the rain to go and devastate the whole area of Gokula Vrndavana. "The residents of Vrndavana have insulted me!" He said. "They have rejected me, have stopped worshiping me, and are instead worshiping that mountain, that hill of Govardhana. I can't tolerate this insult! Go and devastate them." By the order and wrath of Indra, the master of all the higher subtle elements, heavy rain began to fall. And so thunder, hail, and rain simultaneously attacked the whole of Vraja Mandala.

Consequently, all the residents of Vrndavana were thrown into a great disaster. Misery, pain, and sorrow afflicted the animals and the protectors of the animals, the gopalas. So the helpless - the women, children, and animals of Vrndavana - had no alternative but to take refuge of Krsna. They all came to Krsna for relief. They cried, "O Krsna! Now what are we to do? You influenced us to stop the sacrifice meant for Indra, and now Indra, being vindictive, has begun to afflict us in this very heavy way. How can we live? Please save us!" They all came to Krsna for protection. Seeing this, Krsna had much pity for them. Being merciful upon them, He smiled a little, thinking, "They have all come to Me for relief."

At that time, with only one hand Krsna lifted up the Govardhana mountain. For Him, it was a very easy thing; with only one hand, He uprooted the hill and lifted it up as a child lifts a toy ball. And holding up that great mountain, Krsna gave protection to all those who were living in Gokula. The men, women, and children of Vrndavana brought the cows and all their worldly goods and took shelter beneath Govardhana Hill.

The whole cowherd society was given shelter under that hill. In this way, by lifting Govardhana Hill, Krsna gave protection to the residents of Vrndavana, and crushed the pride of the lord of heaven, Indra himself.

And so Nanda Maharaja prays in this verse, "May that lord of the cows be satisfied by us. Who is Indra when compared to Krsna? Krsna is the master of Indra. And yet He has appeared as the master of cows; the Supreme Absolute Truth has accepted a simple position as the keeper of cows. Superficially, He is a mere cowherd boy. But let that cowherd boy, who holds within Him the power of controlling the whole universe, be satisfied with us. We want to worship that Lord who has taken the humble position of the king of the cows."

From this verse of Srimad-Bhagavatam, we can understand the position of the Lord's pastime at Govardhana. It is also described here that when the Vrajavasis worshipped Him and engaged in sacrifice for His satisfaction, they saw Govardhana Hill as the Supreme Person, extending His hands, accepting the things offered to Him, and feeding Himself.

At that time, Krsna pointed out, "You see! You thought that Govardhana Hill was only a heap of stone. No - it is living, it is the Supreme Personality of Godhead." At that time, Krsna revealed Himself as Govardhana Hill and showed how it is also His extended self. According to authorities in our line, Radha-kunda is the extended self of Srimati Radharani and Govardhana is the extended self of Krsna. And so we worship a stone from Govardhana Hill, a part of Giridhari, as Krsna Himself. We may understand from this that a part of the infinite is infinite. And yet so feeble is our ordinary vision that although Govardhana-sila is a part of the infinite, and therefore also infinite, to our material vision it is only a piece of stone.

This pastime shows that a thing may appear to be ordinary stone, but its possibility is infinite. In the general sense, Einstein's theory of relativity has announced that anything we see is that thing plus something more. In his own scientific way he explains that the reality of a thing includes its possibilities, its prospect - reality is not at a standstill.

Reality is not limited to what is seen or conceived by our senses. Our vision or estimation of anything may be limited, but unknown to us, its prospect may be unlimited. Everything has infinite possibility. We

do not even know what infinite possibility a particle of sand may have. We do not know what sort of possibility may exist within a leaf of a plant. It may appear ordinary, but it may contain invaluable medicinal properties.

God The Beautiful

A part of the infinite is also infinite. The Govardhana-sila represents Krsna as the master and keeper of cows. Within Govardhana is that mild and soft conception of God the Beautiful. We beg for His mercy, His affection, and His gracious glance upon us.
That may save us from the negative influence of this material environment. When we try to put a stop to our material form of life and take our course towards Godhead, Krsna consciousness, neglecting the imperative duties that are upon us, so many difficulties may come to trouble us, to trap us in our journey towards the ultimate truth. But if we stick to the order of Krsna, He will protect us. Krsna confirms this in Bhagavad-gita:

sarva-dharman parityajya
mam ekam saranam vraja
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo
moksayisyami ma sucah

He says, "Abandon all other conceptions of duty and just surrender unto Me. Have no fear. I shall protect you and free you from all sinful reactions that might arise from neglecting your ordinary duties."
Different material tendencies and mental impulses may attack us - even Indra himself, the king of heaven and the controller of all ordinary activities, may attack us - but if we are attentive towards our goal, if we are careful to read the order of Krsna, He will protect us in the shade of His lotus feet. He will give us shelter under the shade of Govardhana Hill, where no Indra will be able to touch our heads. And with full faith that Krsna will give us protection, we should try to take shelter under Govardhana Hill and pray: "O Krsna, give me protection

from all the difficulties that may come to attack me because of my leaving behind my ordinary obligations."
Although many anomalies may try to catch us, Krsna will protect us. And in His representation as Govardhana Hill, that wonderful master of the cows will save us from all sorts of difficulties. How is this possible? God works wonders. His ways are unknown and inconceivable.

Fifth Chapter

Brahma's Illusion

"Krishna is infinite; He is the wonderful wonder of wonders. As much as we search Him out, we will find no end to His wonders. Even Lord Brahma, the creator of this universe and the original guru of our sampradaya, was astonished by the wonders of Krishna."

Lord Brahma

"I offer my prayers unto You, O praiseworthy Lord who are the child of the cowherd Nanda. Your complexion is the dark-blue color of a thundercloud and You are clad in silk garments that shine like lightning. Your charming face is adorned with gunja-mala ornaments, and Your hair is decorated with a peacock feather. You look beautiful wearing a garland of forest flowers, and that beauty is enhanced by the morsel of food in Your left hand. You carry a buffalo horn and a stick for herding cows tucked beneath Your left arm. You hold a flute and other emblems, and Your feet are as soft as a lotus."

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krsna, the ultimate cause of all harmony, is so wonderful that simply by approaching Him, we will be charmed by His ways. He is known as Urukrama, for His strides are wonderful, unthinkable, unknown, and unknowable. There is no end to His wonders. Ascaryavat pasyati kascid enam ascaryavad

vadati tathaiva canyah: At every step towards Him, one feels wonder. We find no end to that feeling. Krsna is infinite; He is the wonderful wonder of wonders. As much as we search Him out, we will find no end to His wonders.

Even Lord Brahma, the creator of this universe and the original guru of our sampradaya, was astonished by the wonders of Krsna. Once when Krsna was living in Dvaraka, He heard that Lord Brahma, the creator of the universe, had come to see Him. Krsna asked His messenger, "Which Brahma?" When the messenger put this question to Brahma, Brahma thought, "Are there other Brahmas also? How is it possible?" He told the messenger, "You just inform Krsna that I am the father of the four Kumaras: the four-headed Brahma." The messenger went to Krsna with the news.

"Yes, show him in," Krsna said, knowing Brahma's temperament. Brahma went in, but he was astounded to see that so many Brahmas had gathered there from all of the universes in the creation. There were hundred-headed, thousand-headed, million-headed Brahmas - all present there. Because the whole creation is based on Krsna's hypnotism, the four-headed Brahma could see Krsna and all those other Brahmas, but the other Brahmas could not see each other. Each one of them saw only Krsna. Each one of them thought, "Krsna has come in my universe and called for me out of some necessity." But the Brahma of this universe could see everything because he had inquired, 'Which Brahma?' What is the meaning of 'Which Brahma?' Are there any otherBrahmas? I wonder...." In this way, Lord Brahma, the creator of the universe, was baffled by the wonderful ways of Krsna.

Previously, in Vrndavana, Brahma had also had some doubt about the position of the Lord. He thought, "Who is this cowherd boy? His ways are very questionable. He moves in such a way that it appears that He does not care for anyone. He is within my brahmanda, my universe, but He does not care to know me. What is this attitude? Who is He? He is not Narayana. Only Narayana is above me. And I am a little accustomed to His ways and manners. But this boy is not Narayana. That anything can exist above Narayana is impossible. Then who is He?"

To test Krsna, Brahma took away the cowherd boys and calves accompanying Him and hid them in a cave. After a year he returned to see how life was continuing in Vrndavana, to see how Krsna was

doing without His calves and cowherd boys. And he found that everything was as before. The Lord, surrounded by His cowherd boyfriends, was carrying His flute under His armpit and a morsel of food in His hand. He found everything going on as it had been.

Then Brahma began to think, "What is this? Have the calves and cowherd boys come back without my notice?" He again checked the cave where he had hid them and found that they were all there. Then he thought, "How is this possible? I stole the calves and cowherd boys and hid them here and now that I have returned, I find they are all still here just as before."

Finally, perplexed, he fell at Krsna's lotus feet, praying, "My Lord, I could not recognize You. You have come to play such a plain and ordinary part, that of a cowherd boy. How can anyone believe that You hold an even greater position than that of Narayana? Please forgive whatever I have done."

In many places in Srimad-Bhagavatam, we find Lord Brahma. the creator of the universe, being tested by Krsna. And still, Brahma is our gurudeva. He is the original guru of our line. That he could become bewildered is so perplexing and difficult to understand that Madhvacarya eliminated that section from the Srimad-Bhagavatam. He could not accept those two chapters of Srimad-Bhagavatam where Brahma was under illusion, where he had some misunderstanding about Krsna. But Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu accepted everything in toto.

This is a very peculiar thing. How can the original guru of our sampradaya become bewildered about Krsna? It is acintya, inconceivable. Still, everything is intelligible through the philosophy of acintya-bhedabheda-tattva, "inconceivable oneness and difference." How can we accommodate that our original guru becomes perplexed, not only once, but twice? That is lila, a divine pastime. An example of acintya-bhedabheda-tattva is found in the way Krsna deals with His devotees. Krsna Himself is independent of everything. Still, sometimes He shows Himself to be completely subordinate to His servants and must do whatever they want Him to. Then again, sometimes He completely ignores them. These are the spontaneous pastimes of the Sweet Absolute. Sometimes He shows absolute submission to Srimati Radharani, and again, sometimes He ignores Her. This is the very nature of Krsna's lila.

Crooked Pastimes

Rupa Goswami has supplied a verse from his Ujjvala-nilamani as the basis of the proper understanding of krsna-lila. When we think about the pastimes of the absolute, we, the finite, will have to wear this armor: aher iva gatih premnah svabhava-kutila bhavet. We must understand that Krsna's pastimes are naturally crooked, just like the movement of a snake. A snake cannot move in a straight line; he moves in a zig-zag way. The waves that flow from the absolute move in the same way. That characteristic of krsna-lila is always maintained above everything else. Krsna can never be ruled by any law. With this initial consideration we should approach any study of the absolute. We must always keep in mind that He is absolute, and we are infinitesimal. He is adhoksaja, transcendental, beyond the world of our experience.

Once I asked our Prabhupada, "Why is there a difference between Sanatana and Rupa in their conception of the final part of krsna-lila? Sanatana closed his summary of Krsna's pastimes in his Krsna-lila-stava in Mathura, and Rupa took it another step towards Dvaraka in his Lalita-madhava. He wrote two plays dealing with krsna-lila: one about Dvaraka and one about Vrndavana. Vidagdha-madhava takes place in Vrndavana; Lalita-madhava takes place in Dvaraka. But Sanatana Goswami liked to complete Krsna's pastimes in Mathura.

According to Sanatana Goswami, after a long separation between Krsna and His family and friends, like a wheel the pastime moves from Mathura again to Vrndavana. After Krsna has gone to Mathura, the residents of Vrndavana, overwhelmed by separation, begin to think, "Krsna has been gone for such a long time. Nanda and Yasoda have lost their child!" The separation intensifies and develops further until they begin to think, "Oh, Nanda and Yasoda have no child!" Then they think, "They must have a child," and begin to pray for the appearance of Krsna. Then Krsna appears as the son of Nanda and Yasoda. The cycle is complete and everyone is happy thinking, "Oh yes, Yasoda has got a child." In this way Krsna's pastimes again begin

developing in Vrndavana and move to Mathura, where He kills Kamsa.

In his Krsna-lila-stava, his summary of krsna-lila, Sanatana Goswami did not take Krsna into Dvaraka from Mathura Mandala. But Rupa Goswami, in his play Lalita-madhava, showed the parallels between krsna-lila in Vrndavana and krsna-lila in Dvaraka. And so, in his Lalita-madhava, Rupa Goswami draws a parallel between Lalita as Jambavati, Radharani as Satyabhama, and Candravali as Rukmini. In this way, he shows the transformation between Vrndavana and Dvaraka.

Beyond Experience

I asked Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada about this difference between Rupa and Sanatana. He simply said, "It is adhoksaja, beyond our understanding. So krsna-lila is "un-understandable" (acintya). Everything is not bound to come within our fist. The Supreme Lord has "All Rights Reserved." This must be understood if we at all want to be in connection with that plane of reality.

So Srimad-Bhagavatam says: jnane prayasam udapasya namanta eva: It is a defect to want to understand everything about divinity. Knowledge may be a qualification here in this world, but in relation to the transcendental truth of the highest order, the tendency to want to know everything is a disqualification.

We want to know the value of everything. We want to have the key to everything in our possession. But this is really a bar to progress. If we assert ourselves in this way, we rather lose what confidence we might have in divinity, and there will be some delay in extending the key to us. If a servant, upon getting employment in the master's house, is very eager to be entrusted with the house keys, then the master will suspect him. So to want to know everything is a type of disease, it is an enemy to our progress.

This is, of course, difficult to accept. But still, it is true. Surrender is everything. What cultivation of knowledge do we find in the gopis -

the most exalted devotees of Krsna? What was their acquaintance with scripture? Nothing.
What we understand to be "standard purity," what we think to be knowledge - all these things are disqualifications in giving pleasure to the absolute. An example of how our misconceived standards of "purity" and "chastity" are a disqualification can be seen in the following story.

A Mystic Physician

In order to prove the supreme position of Srimati Radharani, one day, Krsna appeared to suddenly fall ill. As He lay sick, He came in another form, disguised as a physician, and said:
"O Yasoda, I have heard that your boy has caught some disease. Is it true?
"Yes, yes, who are you?"
"I am a physician - a mystic physician. I would like to see your son. What is His disease?"
"He fainted; perhaps He has a headache."
Then Krsna in the dress of the physician told Mother Yasoda, "This is a very serious disease. I want to cure Him. But I can only do so if I can have some water brought in a porous pot. Some water should be brought from the Yamuna in a pot that has many holes in it. Only a chaste lady can do this. A chaste girl must bring some water in a porous pot. With the help of that I shall give some medicine to this boy, and He will come to consciousness immediately."
Then Yasoda madly began to search Vrndavana for a chaste lady. Jatila and Kutila were Radharani's mother-in-law and sister-in-law. Because they naturally preached that there was doubt or suspicion about the chastity of the other girls among the gopis, they themselves were generally considered to be chaste. So Yasoda appealed to one of them, Jatila, first. "Take this porous pot and fetch some water from the Yamuna."
"How is it possible? To fetch water in a porous pot is impossible."
"No. The physician says that if one is really a chaste lady, then she can fetch water in a porous pot."

Jatila could not avoid the mad request of Yasoda. Her request was so intense that she had to go. But she could not fetch water from the Yamuna because there were so many holes in the pot. Then Kutila was requested to fetch water in the pot, but she dared not venture to try it, seeing the attempt of her mother. Still, Yasoda was so earnest in her request that Kutila also could not avoid the task. Yasoda couldn't tolerate for a second that her son was in such a condition. And so her request was so intense that Kutila had to go. But she could not fetch water either, because there were so many holes in the waterpot that the water just poured through.

They were astonished, thinking, "What can we do? Among all the girls in Vraja, not a single chaste girl is to be found? What a horrible thing!" So Krsna, in the garb of a physician, singled out Radharani, saying: "I think that She is a chaste lady. Request Her to fetch the water."

And at the request of Yasoda, Radharani could not avoid the task. She had to go fetch water, but She was thinking of Krsna: "If You come to My relief, then only it may be possible; otherwise it is impossible," She prayed. Radharani dipped the porous pot in the water as Krsna touched the pot from within the water. And Radharani with great suspicion took the pot from the water and in great wonder She said, "The water is there!" She had taken some of Her maids, the sakhis, Her chief friends, with Her, and they were all astounded to find that She drew the water from the Yamuna. The holes were there but still the water remained within the pot. So She brought the water to Yasoda and everyone was astounded. And that water with some fictitious medicine was given to the boy Krsna, and Krsna arose from His "unconscious" state.

This was a tactic by Krsna to show the position of Radharani, to show what chastity is. What is chastity? Ordinary "chastity" is not real chastity. Real purity, real chastity, is far above all relative considerations of chastity. And that is inconceivable, beyond our knowledge and reason, just as how a porous pot can contain water. It is a miracle.

But God works wonders. His ways are filled with miracles. We, should be prepared for that. We should be prepared that all the knowledge of this world, all our experience, will prove to be wrong. So it is said, jnane prayasam udapasya namanta eva: Be clear of your

past experiences, what you have drawn from the world of the senses, empiric knowledge (pratyaksa-jnana). Your tendency will always be to try to push your way into the transcendental world on the strength of mundane knowledge. But this verse is saying, "You fallen people, your capital is the experience of this world, of the senses. But it won't do, it won't have any value in that higher plane. What is found there is a new thing, so approach that world with an open mind; understand that everything is possible with the infinite. All your expectations, your past experience, has no value. Why don't you give up trying to dodge this point?"

The transcendental world is something quite new to us. It is very difficult to get out of this superstition of so-called "truth" here. But still it is necessary that we accept that anything and everything is possible with God. He is the master of impossibilities. Possibility and impossibility are found only in our dictionary, yet even Napoleon wanted to remove the word "impossible." He said, "'Impossible' is a word in a fool's dictionary."

How are we to understand that the original guru of our sampradaya becomes bewildered? It is "impossible." We must suspend our "knowledge" (jnane prayasam udapasya namanta eva). We may take it that Krsna is playing hide and seek, perhaps, with Brahma, our gurudeva. It is like a game of hide and seek. Sometimes Krsna is defeating others and sometimes He is defeated.

Krishna Balarama

When Krsna and Balarama are playing with Their friends in the jungle, They generally play in two groups. Krsna is in one group and Balarama is in another. Krsna is considered to be less strong than Balarama. Balarama was the strongest person there, and the next strongest was Sridama, so Sridama used to play on the side of Krsna.

Whenever Balarama was defeated, He would become enraged. Krsna would diplomatically help His own team, and when Balarama saw that His own team was disloyal due to Krsna's tricks, He would turn to His younger brother Krsna and say, "I shall punish You!" But Krsna

would say, "No, You cannot punish Me; Mother Yasoda has entrusted Me in Your care. You can't mistreat Me."

One day, Balarama slapped Krsna, but Krsna went to Mother Yasoda and told on Him. Balarama was very disturbed and said, "I slap You once, and You complain to Your mother that I do not love You? Krsna, how could You do this?" At last Krsna was perplexed and accepted His defeat.

So krsna-lila moves in a crooked way (*aher iva gatih premna. . .*). This fundamental point, the foundation of our understanding about krsna-lila has been given by Rupa Goswami in this verse. He says, "Don't be eager to find reason everywhere in the pastimes of divinity. They are naturally crooked. In krsna-lila we shall find that although no party is defective, still, one will find fault with another and begin a quarrel. No defect can be found there. But still, for the necessity of lila, false defects are found, and some quarrel begins. This is the meaning of lila, pastimes: what we find here by necessity flows there automatically. We can't try to apply our reason or our standard of measurement to the movements of the infinite. And whatever gain we have made by connecting with that flow of lila will be lost in our attempts to measure it; that will be the only consequence of our analysis. So we should try to have a taste of lila with a submissive attitude. Sometimes reason, logic, and analysis are necessary, but only to preach to the people in general who have a lower understanding. Only for the purpose of preaching to people addicted to reason do we have to take the help of reason. But when devotion becomes automatic, anuraga, then both reason and scripture are left in the subterranean position. There is no place for scriptural arguments there. To a certain extent, reason is necessary for our development up to vaidhi-bhakti, the elementary stages of devotion. But above that, it has no use.

Anuraga-bhajana is automatic; that is the nature of lila: aher iva gatih premna. Everything there moves by His sweet will. Sweet will means that it is not a fixed program. It moves in such a way that we can't say, "It will pass by this road."

When the Maharaja of Mysore used to drive into town, he would not speak to his driver, giving him directions which way to go, because if any fixed program were arranged, then his life might be in danger. So whenever he would come to a crossing in the road, he would touch his

stick to a particular shoulder of the driver. If at the crossing, the Maharaja wanted to go to the right, he would touch the driver on his right shoulder. In this way, he would never disclose which way he would go, but only at the last moment he would beckon the driver to take a particular course.

So Krsna's divine movements are kept in reserve by His sweet will: "All Rights Reserved." We want to search for some law above His sweet will, but this is inconsistent. It is self-contradictory. On the one side we say that Krsna moves by His own sweet will, but on another side we try to find some law governing His movement. This is a contradiction. Lila moves by sweet will. When we say it is lila, then we can't give any shape to that. We can say that it was shown in a particular place in a particular way. But we cannot be sure whether today the same course will be taken.

This is why we find differences in the explanations given about different lilas in different ages. Jiva Goswami has explained that the reason for different descriptions of the pastimes of the Lord in the Puranas is because at one time that lila was played in one way, and another time it was played in another way. So we find differences even in the explanations of the same pastime.

Scholars may challenge: "Why is it that somewhere in Padma Purana the lila is mentioned in this way, but the Bhagavata Purana reveals the description in another way? Why does Harivamsa differ from Mahabharata?" We say that in different kalpas, or ages, the pastimes are enacted in different ways. In infinite ways a particular lila of the Lord may be represented within this world, because He is infinite, independent, and absolute. So leaving aside all doubts and suspicions, we shall be most generous in approaching the absolute, free from all inhibitions. We shall approach Him with that spirit, and try more and more to leave aside our past prejudices and precedents, the records of our past experience.

Is God Dead?

We shall approach Him remembering that He is still living. It is not a stereotyped thing. We should not expect only what was done once

before. If we expect the same thing it will only reassure us by its repetition that He is not a living thing; that Divinity is under historical law. Should we think that in the past He showed Himself in a particular way, so He is compelled to show Himself in that way always? Is He not living today? Can He not show anything new?

At every moment, every second, He can show everything in quite a new way. So our heart should open wide when we approach the highest authority of the absolute plane of play. That means surrender must be increased to no limit. Surrender is limitless, and His play or lila is also limitless. With that sort of deep vision, we shall try to read His lila. So although Brahma and the other gods and gurus and the givers of many sastras may have given some description of His pastimes, we shall have to realize that Krsna's pastimes are not bound by their descriptions. Krsna is not confined within a cage.

So for this reason, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu did not hesitate to give a description of the bewilderment of Brahma (brahma-vimohana-lila). Brahma was bewildered in krsna-lila in Vrndavana, and again when Brahma went to have an interview with Krsna in Dvaraka, we find the same condition. The boundary of the sweet will of the infinite is such that anything can be accommodated there, and even Lord Brahma, the creator of the universe, can be perplexed by Krsna.

All these pastimes are like so many lighthouses showing us which way to go. Brahma is our guru, but he was bewildered by Krsna. And Vedavyasa, the universal guru, was also chastised by Narada. Narada was put to the test many times. All these examples are showing us the way, they are pointing out the direction. It is said, srutibhir vimrgyam: The authentic books about the revealed truth are only showing the way. They say: "Go in this direction. Where? We do not exactly know, but you may go in this direction." They are only showing the direction. All the srutis, the guidance given by the scholars of revealed truth, give some direction: "Go this way, in this direction, and perhaps you may find it."

Krsna says: Vedais ca sarvair aham eva vedyo: "All the Vedas are intended to reveal Me, the infinite." They mean to show how the infinite is moving. If I analyze one atom within my fist, I can analyze it again and again and reanalyze it to no end. It is already within my fist, and yet it is infinite. So it has been said that we may get the maximum benefit by surrendering. Krsna says, "Give up all your

prejudices and the limitations drawn from the limited world and be open. Then it will be easy for the infinite to cast different shades of light on your soul and your knowing faculty. And then it will be easy for you also to cleanse your plane of understanding, cleanse your glass, the mirror of your heart."

In connection with the infinite you will find that everywhere there is center, nowhere circumference. But to realize this, you must try to live in eternity, in Vaikuntha. Kuntha means "measurement." Vaikuntha means "no crookedness, no limit, no measure." That is Vaikuntha.

When Krsna opened His mouth, Yasoda was astonished to find the entire universal creation. Yasoda was nonplused. "What do I see? The whole universe? The infinite in the finite?" At that moment she almost fainted, but then her cat cried aloud. And Krsna, as if He was very much afraid of the sound of the cat, caught hold of His mother out of fear. Then at once, Yasoda's apprehension disappeared. She thought, "Oh, no...He is my son! There is no representation of the infinite within Him; He is my son." And she embraced Him.

When Brahma took away the cowherd boys and calves, he thought that he had created some want in the lila, but he came to find it flowing just as it had been. Not even the least part of it had been disturbed. Krsna had expanded Himself to become the calves and the cowherd boys. When Krsna Himself took the form of all the calves and cowherd boys, then the mothers felt an infinite type of affection, so much so that they could not understand, but were rather entranced, thinking, "How beautiful these boys are!" And the cows were also mad to show their affection to those calves. Then, Brahma thought, "Have those cowherd boys and calves that I have stolen come here stealthily to join Him?" Again he went to see where he had hidden them. He saw, "No, the boys and calves are where I kept them in the caves of the mountain. They are there!" Again he returned to where Krsna was and saw everything continuing as it had been. At that time Brahma surrendered and was reassured. He spoke the following prayer:

naumidya te 'bhravapuse tadidambaraya
gunjavatamsa-paripicchala-sanmukhaya
vanyasraje kavalavetravisana-venu-
laksmasriye mrdupade pasupangajaya

Srimad-Bhagavatam 10.14.1

"I offer my prayers unto You, O praiseworthy Lord who are the child of the cowherd Nanda. Your complexion is the dark blue color of a thundercloud and You are clad in silk garments that shine like lightning. Your charming face is adorned with gunja-mala ornaments, and Your hair is decorated with a peacock feather. You look beautiful wearing a garland of forest flowers, and that beauty is enhanced by the morsel of food in Your left hand. You carry a buffalo horn and a stick for herding cows tucked beneath Your left arm. You hold a flute and other emblems, and Your feet are as soft as a lotus." That is the general meaning of this verse. The internal meaning of this verse, however, is this: "O venerable one, we submit our prayers to You. Who are You? You are un-seeable, un-feelable, unknown, and unknowable. Your complexion is the color of a black cloud, and therefore You are very difficult to see, but You can be seen because of Your yellow garb." Yellow is Radharani's color. So only by the help of Krsna's potency can it be ascertained who He is. Tadit means lightning. By the help of lightning we can see a black cloud at night. So although Krsna is unknown and unknowable, His potency can reveal Him to us. Brahma says, "You are the venerable entity I have come to know. Now I bow down to You. Your body is like that of a black cloud, and that is some mystic representation. Black generally cannot be detected. But Your dress of yellow color helps us to know what You are. It is carrying some similarity to the yellow dress of Narayana. Your black body and yellow dress hints towards the personification of Narayana. You are unknown and unknowable Yourself. But Your yellow dress - Your potency - makes You known to us.

And You come down to our level as if You were one in our position. You are dressed as a cowherd boy, playing in the jungle with a lump of foodstuffs in Your hand. That deceives us in ascertaining who You are. And You adore ordinary things. Even the garland that You wear is collected from ordinary jungle flowers. Your taste appears to be for lower things.

"And all these signs are misleading us. You take a morsel of food in Your hand and run after cows. That is a sign of being low-class. The higher-caste people like brahmanas and ksatriyas cannot move like

this or behave in such a way with their food. The instrument you carry - a bamboo flute - is also unsophisticated. And Your stride is short. All this is misleading us to have a lower conception of You. You are hiding Yourself, so how can we understand You? What fault is there on our part, then, for not recognizing Your supremacy? It is difficult to accept that You, Krsna, are the master of everything.

"You have so many plain ornaments. We don't find anything that is gorgeous or filled with splendor here in Vrndavana. We are accustomed to find those things in Vaikuntha. But this is new. You have come here to show Your playful pastimes. Here in Vrndavana we have come across a new conception. And it is wonderful, plain, and charming. Plain, yet most attractive.

"With simple ordinary things You have decorated Yourself, but You are so extraordinarily charming. It is impossible to understand and to describe. Generally in this world, the position of cowherd boys is of no real significance. They represent the lower section of society. But here in Vrndavana, such a position is so wonderful and charming that we find You all-attractive - hypnotizing us.

"And Your movement is very slow but sure. Your movement is such that You don't care for anything else in this world. Though You are in a lower position, Your posture is such that apparently You don't care for anything in this world. In You we find the highest conception garbed in a very plain way - but a very wonderful way. In connection with You, things of ordinary value become charming. Although I am the Creator and have created everything, I fail to understand this sort of creation. I am proud that I have created so many things in the world, but I am overwhelmed to see the beauty of the environment here in Vrndavana. Here Your movement is slow, but sure and beautiful. You may be the son of that human being who keeps the cows; this is not a very high status in society or in the scriptures, but it is the nature of Your personality that whatever You do, You make it hold the highest position. What is this! Whoever You may be, my vanity is defeated. I take refuge at Your holy feet - I surrender. Please help me to understand what You really are." In this way, Brahma surrendered. And so, Krsna is beyond the understanding even of the creator of the universe. He is infinite. And He is infinite not only in the consideration of space, but also in the consideration of time - He is infinite in every sort of consideration. Infinite. His infinite potency is

represented in consciousness, in existence, and then in dealings of love.

Absolute Sweetness

The scriptures give us three conceptions of the infinite: Brahman, Paramatma, and Bhagavan. The Brahman conception is the all-comprehensive infinite. Whatever we can conceive is within it. Paramatma is the smallest of the small: anor aniyan. Whatever you can conceive of that is small, it is smaller than that. And the Bhagavan, or personal conception of Godhead, is of two types: one is as the master of infinite majesty and power, and the other is of absolute sweetness.

Jiva Goswami has given the essential meaning of Bhagavan in his Bhakti-Sandarbha. He says, bhagavan bhajaniya-sarva-sad-guna visistha. By Bhagavan, he describes this aspect of infinite: bhajaniya, worshipable. When we come in touch with Him, then we want to surrender ourselves for His satisfaction - that type of infinite. There are various types of infinite. The highest conception of the infinite is bhajaniya guna visistha: He is so beautiful and attractive that He is attracting all to surrender to Him. No other conception of the infinite, neither infinite space, nor time, nor anything else can approach this highest conception of the infinite: the all-attractive infinite. All the other aspects of the infinite - infinite time, infinite space, infinite power - are external. But infinite love which attracts love and self-surrender is the highest type of infinite. And that is Krsna.

Attraction is the most fundamental element everywhere. All else can be eliminated and forgotten if we come in touch with attraction and love. Everything can be ignored if we are in connection with love. The fulfillment of our existence, of all existence, of everything, is in love. Love is the principle in the center which is the only fulfillment of all existence. The very gist of existence is there; it can't be ignored or challenged by any other forms or aspects of our substantial existence. It is unchallengeable and absolute.

Whatever we may experience, the most central need for fulfillment remains: love. The absolute king of everything is love. Nothing can

stand in comparison with it. Coming in clash with the principle of love, all will have to accept defeat. Mahaprabhu pointed out that this is the most substantial thing in this world.

Madhvacarya, in his conception of how one should see the acarya, the spiritual master, could not harmonize Brahma's bewilderment. After all, he is the sampradaya guru, the foremost guru of the tradition, the Brahma-Madhva-sampradaya. So Madhvacarya omitted these two chapters on the illusion of Brahma from Srimad-Bhagavatam. But Mahaprabhu did not. He accepted Sridhara Swami's edition, which is in accordance with the suddhadvaita philosophy of Visnuswami. The Visnuswami sampradaya are followers of ragamarga, spontaneous devotion. Sridhara Swami included those two chapters with his commentary, and Mahaprabhu accepted that, and it is corroborated in Caitanya-caritamrta. Madhvacarya could not accommodate the idea that guru may be seduced. He could not tolerate that guru may not know everything, may not be omniscient, but Mahaprabhu could.

Sixth Chapter

Sonhood of God

Sri Govinda

"Love's power is unthinkable. Although it is impossible, the infinite is defeated by the finite. What is that unthinkable position? It can. only be attained through love. And how adorable and precious and valuable love is! To acquire a drop of that divine love, no sacrifice is sufficient. So we are encouraged to die to live."

Bala Krishna

"We are worshipers not of the fatherhood of Godhead, but of the sonhood of Godhead. We don't worship Him as the creator or as the controller, out on the circumference, but in the conception of sonhood, He is in the center. He is not on the circumference, but in the center. That is the conception of Srimad-Bhagavatam: sonhood, and then consorthood, a more heavenly expression, is found there. He is there in the center, and His extensions emanate from Him. So in our conception of the absolute, His father is controlling Him, His mother is abusing Him and punishing Him, and He is also seen to fall at the feet of His beloved."

This can be understood by considering that we are worshipers not of the fatherhood of Godhead, but of the sonhood of Godhead. We don't worship Him as the creator or as the controller, out on the circumference, but in the conception of sonhood, He is in the center. He is not on the circumference, but in the center. It is not that from one side He is furnishing everything, creating everything in the background. No; He is in the center. That is the conception of Srimad-Bhagavatam: sonhood, and then consorthood, a more heavenly expression, is found there. He is there in the center, and His extensions emanate from Him. So in our conception of the absolute, His father is controlling Him, His mother is abusing Him and punishing Him, and He is also seen to fall at the feet of His beloved. What to speak of guru, even Godhead Himself may appear to become bewildered about His absolute position.

And why? Love divine. Prema. So how highly precious a thing divine love must be. After liberation, beyond calculative devotion, in the highest plane of the whole creation, eternal love reigns supreme. And that divine love emanates from Him just as rays of light emanate from the sun.

So He is at the center and His extension is on all sides. Baladeva on one hand supplies the energy of existence, maintaining everything in the background, and the ecstatic side is controlled by His potency Srimati Radharani, who can make the Absolute Independent a ball in the play of Her hand.

It is inconceivable, it is incalculable, but this is the very nature of divinity. The Lord says, aham bhakta-paradhino... "Yes, I have freely accepted subjugation to My devotees. I have no independence of My own. The way My devotees treat Me is so wonderful that it makes Me subservient to them." Divine love is so charming that it is considered to be the ultimate goal of life, and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu personally came along with Nityananda Prabhu to broadcast that news to the world.

Ocean Of Love

We may have a taste of that divine life only in that plane of nectar. That we may live in the waves of that ocean of love is the highest objective of our lives.

In that divine realm our individual personalities can be maintained. It is not necessary that if we dive deep into the plane of consciousness, we must lose our own personality, our own individuality. It is not necessary at all. And yet the nature of divine love, is that you are still living, but you are living on His behalf, wholesale converted into His service. It is a wonderful thing: you can keep your personality for the interest of Krsna. But you must have no selfish motive, no conception of separate interest. Merging there is not physical, mortal merging, not merging of the losing variety, but the kind of merging spoken of in Srimad-Bhagavatam (11.29.34):

martyo yada tyakta-samasta-karma

niveditatma vicikirsito me
tadamrtatvam pratipadyamano
mayatma-bhuyaya ca kalpate vai

"One who is subjected to birth and death attains immortality when he gives up all material activities, dedicates his life to the execution of My order, and acts according to My directions. In this way, he becomes fit to enjoy the spiritual bliss derived from exchanging loving mellows with Me."
And in Bhagavad-gita (18.55) Krsna says:

bhaktya mam abhijanati
yavan yas casmi tattvatah
tato mam tatvato jnatva
visate tad-anantaram

"Only through love and devotion can I be understood as I am. Thereafter, fully understanding Me, you can merge into My entourage."
This "merging" is explained by Krsna: "They enter into Me to become a person in My family. Among the circles of My friends, he enters: visate tad anantaram. He becomes as if My own. That means that without losing your personality you can be fully My own." To enter into the Lord's family is a living merging, not a physical or dead merging into Brahman, spirit. That is the result of prema, divine love.
That ideal is above the general conception of merging into the oneness of Brahman, where one loses oneself in the ocean of consciousness as if in a sound sleep. We are not interested in that. Rather, through Krsna consciousness, we become lost swimming in the ocean of sweetness. This has been accepted by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Victory of Devotion

Once, Radharani left the rasa-lila when She saw that all the gopis were being dealt with almost equally by Krsna. Equal treatment towards one and all did not satisfy Her. So She decided to display a

composition of singing and dancing to please Krsna in a most wonderful transcendental way. Radharani showed Her skill in various ways, and then at the last moment, She suddenly disappeared. And as Krsna was engaged in that combined singing and dancing, He suddenly found that Radharani was absent. So He left everyone to search for Radharani. He met Her on the way, and after walking for some time, Radharani told Him, "I can't move, I can't walk anymore. If You would like to go on, You will have to carry Me. I cannot go further." And suddenly, Krsna disappeared.

A disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura once asked him why Krsna had disappeared in such a way. But our guru maharaja was very disturbed to hear such a question. In this lila, Krsna is apparently showing some disregard for Radharani. So our guru maharaja, by his very nature, could not even tolerate such a question. He had so much partiality towards Radharani that he was not disposed to hear anything against Her. And so, in a rather excited mood he answered, "Do you find any devotion here? What bhakti do you find here that you have asked me this question?" The question was rejected. He could not tolerate even an inquiry regarding that pastime.

When this news came to me, I tried to find what Bhaktivinoda Thakura had written in his own words about this verse of Srimad-Bhagavatam in his own translation, Bhagavatarka-Marici-Mala. Bhaktivinoda Thakura has harmonized the difficulties in the verse. He explains that Krsna was thinking, "I would like to see what will be the mentality of separation in Her." Only to appreciate the depth of the separation She felt from Him did Krsna disappear. Then of course Krsna returned after some time.

But our guru maharaja could not even tolerate the idea. "Where is devotion to be found here?" But Bhaktivinoda Thakura interpreted this pastime to mean that Krsna was driven to see what kind of happiness in separation Srimati Radharani would experience. He took this as an example of how the absolute becomes subservient to His devotee. And so we find that the negative, Srimati Radharani, is so powerful that the positive, Krsna, becomes powerless near Her. It is as if the positive loses its separate existence. This is the victory of devotion.

Devotion is represented in the negative side, drawing from the positive. There is the juice in a fruit and the one who extracts the juice from the fruit. The highest devotion is found where the extraction is in

its most intensified condition - there is the victory of the devotees: where the absolute accepts defeat before His servitors. This reveals the real presence of devotion, dedication, surrender.

Lord of Love

Surrender is so powerful that it can even capture the absolute. We are aspiring for that kind of potency. And whoever possesses that - they are all in all; they are our masters. For our highest interest, we must look towards the direction in which that power is intensified. We shall try to look wherever we find surrender in a thick, condensed stage. Our aim should be directed towards that. We are beggars of that. We are not beggars for anything which can be found in this mundane world: na dhanam na janam na sundarim... not wealth, followers or the enjoyment of women, but eliminating everything else, our aim should be directed towards one thing - that most intensified condition of divine service to the Lord of Love.

We should try to convert everything in such a way that it can go to that unknown quarter beyond the jurisdiction of our sense experience or mental acquisition, like a rocket sent towards deep space. Srimad-Bhagavatam, which draws the essence from all of the revealed scriptures, says that divine love is the most desirable and original thing. We must not allow ourselves to run here and there searching for base fulfillment. We must forcibly concentrate our attention on divine love. Divine love is the highest thing for us; it is the highest in creation, the highest in eternity.

And to take our stand in the negative position is the strategy of remaining in the relativity of the highest quarter of service to Krsna. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura once composed a verse expressing the proper attitude. Pujula ragapatha gaurava bange mattala sadhujana visaya range. "The path of divine love is worshipable to us and should be held overhead as our highest aspiration."

He ordered that a cottage be built for him in Govardhana and said, "I shall live there. I am not fit to live in Radha-kunda. So I shall live in a lower position, but my gurus - Gaurakisora dasa Babaji, Bhaktivinoda Thakura, and others - are fit to serve there. So I shall go and serve

them there in Radha-kunda, and then return to a little lower position, in Govardhana. There I shall stay." That is the proper tactic to maintain a subjective position in the subjective world.

Otherwise, if we think that we are in the highest quarter, that higher reality will vanish from us. Only from a little lower position shall we view that higher plane with respect. But whenever we think that we have attained that higher position, that we are there - we are nowhere. That is the nature of the higher world. So we must maintain a respectable distance. If we try to look directly, we lose, but if we try to look at that plane through a screen or from a hidden place, then we may see. It is most peculiar. If we want to come in direct contact with things of a higher order, then they vanish from our experience. If you can't come in direct connection with some thing, you may find out about it by espionage - it is something like espionage. If you try to know it directly, it is impossible. Only from behind a screen can we have a glimpse.

In that way we can experience the highest ontological truth. As if by chance ontological truth comes to us, He accepts us suddenly, and we can find Him. He is absolute, He is an autocrat, He is independent; whenever He comes by His own whim to give His connection to us, we can have it. It is never within my clutches. He is not an object to come directly within my control. He is always above.

By this system we can come to the highest realization. In the highest order of lila of Radha-Govinda, Krsna asks Radharani to do something, and She refuses, saying "No, I won't do that." And yet this has been accepted as the highest mood of the negative side. To deny Krsna whatever He may want is called bhama-bhava. And Radharani is full of that nature. But that enhances the eagerness, the earnestness of Krsna. The whole system is a crooked one. And yet this is the way recommended for the poorest to come in contact with the highest. It is a wonderful device. The direct transaction, the clear face-to-face transaction, is absent there. Everything is like stealing. Everything there is a stealthy performance. In the highest area, in the area of autocracy, it is wholly blackmarketeering. And for that reason it is known as aprakrta - just similar to the lowest conception of things. In our present living condition, we can't tolerate autocracy. It is considered the lowest thing. But autocracy is there in the highest

world. So it is known as aprakrta: the highest quarter of the transcendental world which can harmonize everything.

The beauty of that plane is that even what is considered to be of the lowest type here is all harmonized there. The harmonious strength is so great there that what is undesirable, nasty, and bad here is harmonized in such a way that it gets the highest position there. Krsna's peculiar position is such that the lowest has been proven to be the highest by His magical touch. Because He is there, no blot is a blot; it is pure. Krsna consciousnessis the touch of Krsna, the beauty of the highest order. Just as the touchstone will not only convert silver into gold, but it will also transform even iron, lead, or any lower thing into gold, the touchstone of Krsna is so powerful that the lowest type of everything within our conception receives the highest position by His magical touch.

Raghunatha Dasa Goswami says that if you are unable to accept this as truth, then you will be thrown down into Vaikuntha: "Go live there, where general law rules, where there are fair dealings. Go down to the land of fair dealings, simple dealings, where you can calculate and go on living very nicely."

A Cowherd Boy

But the higher world of Vrndavana is a most diplomatic position. Even Mahadeva and Brahma are both bewildered in understanding it. Baffled by Krsna, Brahma surrendered to Him and confessed, "How could I know that the highest truth was a cowherd boy with a rod under His armpit and a morsel of food in His hand, searching for His friends?" Brahma said: "I have some intimacy with my father Narayana; whenever any difficulty appears, I approach Him to get some instruction and then act accordingly. But I have never come in connection with any supreme power like this. A cowherd boy taking His food in one hand and a rod in the other, going off in search of His friends - He is the highest? It is inconceivable. But now I see that You are far above my father Narayana. Vaikuntha is a fair and lawful field we know. But we have never experienced such pastimes of tactful and obscure diplomacy. That this sort of thing is going on in the highest

quarter, we should not be blamed for being unaware of that. It is wonderful and hidden, obscure. And yet there is a plane where so much wealth and sweetness are unknown to us." Thomas Gray once wrote:

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."
- Elegy in a Country Churchyard

How peculiar it is to find that the master of everything is a thief. Everything is in His possession, and yet He comes as a thief. Everyone belongs to Him, but He plays the part of a debauchee. Krsna's pastimes are all wonderful. Everything belongs to Him, yet He behaves like a thief, like one of us. That is a peculiar plane and a peculiar type of pastime.

There, all are equal, and some may even be superior. The father and mother of the absolute may be chastising Him, and the Lord may be weeping. Here is bhakti. Where is bhakti? What is the symptom of pure devotion? Where the highest authority is submissive to the servant - that is devotion. Bhakta-paradhinah: The highest has been forcibly taken down to serve the devotee. Devotion has such a peculiar position and power. Ksetra-hari prema bhajana: The last acquisition of devotion is that which can control the Supreme Lord and forcibly take Him to the devotee as a friendly servant. The master surrenders to the servant.

The infinite is at the disposal of the finite. Can we conceive of this? Not only that, but it is done stealthily in various diplomatic ways. So in Krsna consciousness, the finite achieves the supremost unthinkable position, when the infinite comes to serve him. Such a glorious and unthinkable position appears impossible. Yet this impossibility can be effected by devotion, raga, love. Love's power is unthinkable. Although it is impossible, the infinite is defeated by the finite. What is that unthinkable position? It can only be attained through love.

And how adorable and precious and valuable love is! To acquire a drop of that divine love, no sacrifice is sufficient. So we are

encouraged to "die to live." And in that sense, wholesale death is adorable. To achieve such divine love is the impossible of the impossible, but Mahaprabhu came to give us that. How magnanimous He is! He Himself took the position of a canvasser begging from door to door, "Enlist your name. I have come to recruit everyone for that highest quarter where the infinite will be a slave to the finite. Take a drop of that valuable thing." It is the impossible of the impossible, the inconceivable of the inconceivable.

So give up your wild-goose-chasing habit and collect and concentrate all your might to progress in this line, to try to go to the temple of love divine.

In Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.47.61), Uddhava says:

asam aho carana-renu jusam aham syam
vrndavane kim api gulma-latausadhinam
ya dustyajam svajanam arya-patham ca hitva
bhejur mukunda-padavim srutibhir vimrgyam

"The gopis of Vrndavana gave up their husbands, children, and families who are very difficult to renounce, and sacrificed even their religious principles to take shelter of the lotus feet of Krsna, which are sought after even by the Vedas themselves. O! Grant me the fortune to take birth as a blade of grass in Vrndavana, so that I may take the dust of the lotus feet of those great souls upon my head."

Risk enhances the mood of love. It is a necessary part of the highest form of love: to risk so-called worldly achievement. The quest of divine love must be undertaken even at the risk of so much so-called purity of this world. That commands the highest position. Still, it should be very carefully taken. It should follow the line of humility shown by Newton, who was considered by scientists of his day to know everything. He said, "I know nothing." That is the way of proper realization: As much as one is in the midst of genuine purity, so much he thinks that "I am impure." That is the nature of infinite measurement. Because the charm is so infinite, it cannot but be estimated in that way.

The more they achieve, the more they thirst, the more earnestness is found within them. This is the characteristic of realization of the infinite. As much as one progresses, so much he thinks himself

helpless in going further for measurement. No part of the infinite comes into the plane of measurement.

mukam karoti vacalam
panghum langhayate girim
yat krpa tam aham vande
sri gurun dina-taranam

We cannot understand the infinite; we don't find ourselves qualified to give any expression about that, so we become dumb, thinking, "What shall I say?" But He makes us speak, He makes us open our mouths. Otherwise the reader, the knower, becomes dumb. A bona fide searching person is struck dumb with Krsna's ways. He cannot give any expression to that. But the power from on high comes down to make him give some statement. In that way, the truth from that part comes here. He begins to speak, to give vent to his feelings, being pressed by the higher plane, that higher entity. He has no power of his own to walk, but the Lord's wonderful power can help him cross mountains. This is the nature of the grace of the almighty, of the absolute: by His power, everything can move and live. Yato va imani bhutani jayante, yena jatani jivanti, yat prayanty abhisamvisanti: "He is the cause of production, sustenance, and again withdrawal. Evolution, dissolution, and sustenance in the middle. He is the prime, universal cause."
We are quarreling in a foreign land for fictitious gain. But Krsna is engaged in a loving search for His long lost servants. He wants to save them and take them all home. Only by the grace of that absolute is it possible. A wave is coming from there to take us home, to where everything finally enters. Everything which is created disappears into the subtle existence at the wholesale dissolution of this world. But again with a new evolution they come out. And some enter into the permanent lila and do not come back into this world of exploitation and renunciation.

Search for Krishna

We must inquire after Krsna. But first we should inquire, "Who am I? Where am I? In which way shall I move to approach the higher domain?" We are always inquiring, but for what type of thing? Now we should open our hearts wide and inquire about Him. This is our dire necessity. We can't avoid it. And what that inquiry contains, we can't predict the level of thought. Brahman, Paramatma, Bhagavan. Bhagavan inquiry is the highest: the search for Sri Krsna, Reality the Beautiful.

It is a natural necessity within us, for our own interest; we can't avoid it. A sane man who does not want to deceive himself can't avoid the search for Sri Krsna. The most general thing in our nature is to inquire after happiness. This is the general question of all animated beings. The search for Sri Krsna means searching for rasa, the highest form of ecstasy.

If we examine ourselves, we will read and cry: "What have I done? What is my necessity? And how am I passing my days? I must repent, cry. I have passed my days uselessly, I am a traitor to my own self, I am committing suicide. My real complaint is against myself and my so-called friends. We have nothing to do here." So, read and cry; do or die! Progress in the right way, or you are inviting your death. The general tenor of life, of all existence, in the most scientific way, will be this: Search for Sri Krsna, Reality the Beautiful. That is the highest goal not only of humanity, but for all creation. And all problems are harmonized and solved by that.

No complaints against this attempt can be normal. Deviation from this general instruction, the general call, is all false, unnecessary, and injurious. This is the truth, the necessity of everyone, wherever there is life. The most grand, extensive, and friendly call to all, to the whole of the world - the only friendly call - is this: "March towards Krsna!" It is the only call. All others should be silenced. All other topics should be silenced, should be stopped, and only if this call remains, the real welfare of the world remains. So the Upanisads say: Yasmin vijnate sarvam idam vijnatam bhavati yasmin prapte sarvam idam praptam bhavati. "Inquire into that upon knowing which, nothing further remains to be known. Try to achieve that upon gaining which, nothing further remains to be gained."

A comprehensive call is going out, and this is really nonsectarianism. Apparently it is thought to be sectarian by the abnormal thinkers. But

to every normal-thinking person, it is the most general universal thing that can be dealt with.
At present, we are quarreling in a foreign land for fictitious gain. But a sweet wave is coming from above to save us and take us all home. Only by the grace of the Lord's loving search for His lost servants is it at all possible. And all that is expected from us is to join the search for Sri Krsna and march towards the divine domain. Let us join the universal march towards the divine domain, save ourselves, and go back home, back to Godhead.

Seventh Chapter

Knowledge-Free Devotion

Beauty and Love

"The innermost hankering of every living soul is for beauty, love, affection, and harmony; not for power, knowledge, or anything else. This is the diagnosis of the whole creation in time and space: their common cause is one. But it is rare for a soul to reach such a clear stage of hankering for reality as to understand this point. Few souls are to be found in this world who are really conscious of their innermost necessity, who realize, "We want Krishna! We want Vrndavana!"

bhidyate hrdaya-granthis
chidyante sarva-samsayah
ksiyante casya karmani
mayi drste 'khilatmani

"Our inner aspiration for rasa, ecstasy, is buried within our hearts which are tied down and sealed. But hearing and chanting the glories of Krsna breaks the seal on the heart and allows it to awaken and open to receive Krsna, the reservoir of pleasure, ecstasy Himself."

Here, Srimad-Bhagavatam is saying: "There is a knot within our hearts, but that knot will be torn asunder by Krsna consciousness. At that time, the flow of our innate tendency for divine love (svarupa sakti) will inundate the whole heart. When the knot of the heart is torn apart, then, as the sleeping soul awakens, the Goloka conception within will emerge and inundate his entire being."

But this is apparently a difficult problem. How is it possible that all our doubts may be cleared? Is it possible for the finite to know everything? This statement seems rather inconsistent. It seems absurd. The Upanisads, however, say: "Who knows Him knows everything; who gets Him gets everything." How will the finite know that he has everything, that he has known everything? It appears absurd, but it is confirmed in the scriptures. And if this problem is solved, then all problems are solved automatically. The finite will realize wholesale satisfaction; all his inquisitive tendencies will be satisfied. This is confirmed not only in the Upanisads, but also in the Srimad-Bhagavatam.

When I first came to the Gaudiya Math, I mixed very carefully with the devotees. I thought, "They say that what they teach is the only truth and that all else is false - this is a bitter pill to swallow. They say, 'Everyone is suffering from ignorance. And what we say is the right thing.'" I thought, "What is this! A sane man cannot easily swallow such a pill. " I also could not digest it so easily at first. But what they were saying was confirmed by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Srimad-Bhagavatam, Bhagavad-gita, and the Upanisads. All these authorities say, "Yes, it is so. If you know Him, everything is known. If you get Him, everything is gotten."

Srimad-Bhagavatam (4.31.14), in a verse similar to the above line from the Upanisads, also says that all doubts are cleared by Krsna consciousness, and as a result, we come into real knowledge. There it is written:

yatha taror mula-nisecanena
trpyanti tat-skandha-bhujopasakhah
pranopaharac ca yathendriyanam
tathaiva sarvarhanam acyutejya

"By watering the root of a tree, all the leaves and branches are automatically nourished. Similarly, by supplying food to the stomach, all the limbs of the body are nourished. In the same way, if we satisfy the central conception of the Supreme Absolute, all our obligations are automatically fulfilled."

If we put food into the stomach, the whole body is fed. If we pour water on the root of the tree, the whole tree is fed. In the same way, if we do our duty towards the center, then everything is done. This is the greatness, the mysterious position of the absolute center: He has control over the complete whole. This is the peculiar position of the center in the system of the organic whole.

If a particular position of the brain is captured, then the whole body is controlled: one needle in that particular section of the brain, and all the functions of the body will be paralyzed. The peculiar position of the absolute center is something like that. So the impossible becomes possible.

Suppose I am a poor girl who has nothing. Ordinarily it would not be possible to acquire anything. But if I marry a rich man who is the owner of a big property, I can have command over many things by my relationship with him. Although we may be poor, our relationship with a powerful master makes us the master of many things. In the same way, the Absolute Center controls everything, and our affectionate relationship with Him may endow us with the command of many things. This is how it is possible for the finite soul to have possession of everything - through the subtle link of affection.

Through Krsna everything is possible. And the nearer we come to Him, the more we shall catch. His influence inspires His devotees, and all His qualities fill their hearts (sarva maha-guna-gana vaisnava-sarire, krsna-bhakte krsnera guna sakali sancare - Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-lila 22.75). In that way, although a devotee is not himself a master, through the link of love he can be master of anything. This is the line of thought explained by Srimad-Bhagavatam and the Upanisads.

Without having a real connection with the absolute center, your attempts to know everything will be useless. If you try to know even a particle of sand, lifetimes will come and go, millions of lives will pass, and you will continue to analyze the sand, finding no end to understanding even one particle.

The Absolute Center

We are told, "If you want to inquire - inquire about the center. That is the call of the Upanisads: "Don't waste your time trying to analyze the smallest part of this creation, trying to be its master; it is not possible. Your inquiry should be properly guided." Krsna says, "I am the center, and I say, 'Come to know Me, and through Me you will be able to know everything because I know everything and I control everything. Your connection with Me can give you that capacity. Approach everything through Me. Then you will be able to know the proper position of all things. Otherwise you will become acquainted with only a partial aspect of reality, and that will be external and incomplete. And you will pass millions of lives trying to know and understand reality to no end."' Bhagavatam says:

athapi te deva padambhuja-dvaya
prasada-lesanugrhita eva hi
janati tattvam bhagavan mahimno
na canya eko 'pi ciram vicinvan

"Only one who is blessed with the mercy of the Lord can know His true nature. On the other hand, those who try empirically to understand His inconceivable glories can study and speculate forever without arriving at the proper conclusion."

Here, through Bhagavatam, Krsna tells us, "You may devote yourself for eternity in an erroneous direction, with no possibility of coming to the end of understanding. But if you try to approach the absolute center, then in no time you will be able to know what is what." That is the direction given by the Upanisads and Srimad-Bhagavatam, that is the direction we must take, and that is devotion.

It is so satisfying that once you have attained it, you won't care to know any other thing. We need only concentrate on Krsna's service. Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.14.3) declares:

jnane prayasam udapasya namanta eva

jivanti san-mukharitam bhavadiya vartam
sthane sthitah sruti-gatam tanu-van-manobhir
ye prayaso 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyam

"Hatefully giving up all intellectual attempts to understand the Supreme Truth, those who want to realize You should completely surrender unto You. They should hear from self-realized devotees about Your holy name and transcendental pastimes. Whatever situation they may find themselves in, they should progress by fully dedicating their mind, body, and words to You. In this way the infinite, who is never conquered by anyone, becomes conquered through love."

We can approach the Supreme Lord only through submission, and when we achieve Him, we won't care for knowing anything else. We will have no regard for what is happening or not happening in the outside world. We will deeply engage in His service for His satisfaction. There, in His service, we will find the object of our lives fulfilled. And this external knowledge of "things outside" will seem to us as rubbish. We will realize, "What is the necessity of wasting time with all kinds of calculation - the nectar is here! It is far deeper than what is found in the external plane." And at that time, we shall give all our attention to His service.

The question is often asked why varnasrama-dharma, the Vedic system of social stratification, was ignored by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and why it is that anyone from any social position is accepted by our devotional school. We have to cross over the constraints of the caste system (varnasrama-dharma), offering the results of our work to Krsna (krsna karmarpanam), devotion mixed with the desire to enjoy the fruits of work (karma-misra-bhakti), and devotion mixed with the desire for liberation (jnana-misra-bhakti). They have all been rejected by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. His slogan was eho bahya age kaha ara: "These things are external; go deeper, go deeper." When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu asked what is further and higher than all these different conceptions of theism, Ramananda Raya suggested jnana-sunya bhakti, unalloyed devotion. When this was suggested by Ramananda Raya, Mahaprabhu said, "Yes, here real theism begins."

Karma and Jnana

That means karma, fruitive work, and jnana, the cultivation of knowledge, are unnecessary. One can begin a life of bhakti independently of karma and jnana - from any position. Bhakti need only be developed through sukrti, accumulated devotional piety, and through ruci, our eagerness and earnestness for Krsna. That is what is necessary, and not our aspiration to know anything and everything (jnana) or to have so much energy under our control (karma). These two paths lead us to exploitation and renunciation. But wherever one may be, if he wants to get in touch with the Lord, he need only have some inclination to hear about Him from a proper source, a real saint. This is the proper beginning of bhakti. And so, one may begin in the bhakti school independent of any position in the social system of varnasrama.

To become Krsna conscious, one need not be a wise man, nor a very energetic man, he may not be a master of opulence and power - the only requirement that is demanded from him is that he must have an earnest hunger for the Lord. He must find some sweetness, some taste in His words and His affairs when he hears from a proper source - a genuine saint. That taste will take him gradually further and further into the highest domain.

If they want to be successful in their search for the infinite, the seekers of knowledge and power, the jnanis and karmis, will ultimately have to cast out their attachments, break out of their circle, and come to this position. They will have to depend on taste. Taste is everything. A taste for His affairs is the all-important qualification for a devotee. It is all in all. Wherever one may be does not matter. Through his taste for Krsna, one will progress from ruci to the ultimate end of life.

So we are told, "Giving up everything, and even rejecting all conceptions of society and religion as external, exclusively surrender to Krsna." Without hesitation, one should take exclusive shelter of the Lord with full confidence, giving up bad association, and even neglecting the regulative principles governing society and religion. That is to say, one should abandon all material attachment. Saranagati: Take shelter under His protection absolutely.

Creeper of Devotion

A devotee thinks, "Krsna is very, very sweet. I can't avoid Him, I can't live without tasting His sweetness." That feeling is the real seed which can produce the bhakti creeper, the creeper of devotion. And that will gradually grow until it touches the feet of Krsna.
The creeper will grow and yet it won't try to find support anywhere in the planes of consciousness within this world, but it will grow higher and higher. Finally, when it reaches the personal conception of the Absolute, it will experiences some sort of satisfaction. Still, it won't stop there. It will go up to Goloka. It will not stop with the calculative devotion of Vaikuntha. Crossing that plane, it will rise up to the stage of spontaneous, automatic devotion.

Back to Godhead

There we will find the Lord of Love. Love is the worshiping and adoring factor everywhere in that plane. The essential feature of that realm is the relationship of divine love to the central object. And we will find our fulfillment by getting service in a particular position in relation to Him. That is what is needed by everyone: to enter into the land of love and achieve some engagement in the loving service of the central representation of absolute sweetness, beauty, and love. And that highest absolute center came down as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to invite His long lost servants to return to His home, saying: "I have come to invite you and to take all of you to My home - come with Me!" What a fortunate opportunity we have! By accepting His proposal and gaining admittance in that line, how happily we can go back to home, back to God.
This is the very gist of all religions. Knowingly or unknowingly, every soul is searching for divine love. Still, different varieties of obstacles are coming to dissuade us from our campaign. But the heart won't be satisfied unless and until it reaches there. Once begun, our journey

towards Krsna can never be stopped anywhere. It is merely a question of delay: a long long time, ages and ages may pass by, but our ultimate success cannot be checked.
Krsna alone can really attract us. We cannot relish anything else from the depth of our heart and accept it as our final destination. We want only beauty and love, not power or knowledge.

Beggars of Love

It may seem that we want power. We sometimes think that we must have everything; we want that controlling capacity. We want that everything will come under our control, that whatever we want shall be done. But that is not what we truly want. It may seem that we want power, but ultimately power cannot satisfy us. And sometimes we may think that we want to know everything. We may not want to have the power of control over all, but we want to know everything; we don't like to be ignorant. But that is also not the ultimate end which can fulfill our inner necessity. That is not what we really want. We must become educated about our actual necessity - the inner search of our hearts. If we do that properly, we shall find that we are all beggars of love and affection. Adoration is the innermost necessity everywhere. And that can be completely satisfied only in Krsna's pastimes in Vrndavana.
This conclusion was broadcast by Vedavyasa, the compiler of the Vedic scriptures. Even contemporary scholars admit that Vedavyasa has disseminated all possible lines of philosophical thought in the Vedas, Puranas, Mahabharata and Vedanta-sutra. And in his last days, in his philosophical maturity, he gave Srimad-Bhagavatam, which culminates in the conception of divine love, krsna-prema.

"We Want Krishna"

The innermost hankering of every living soul is for beauty, love, affection, and harmony; not for power, knowledge, or anything else.

This is the diagnosis of the whole creation in time and space: their common cause is one. But it is rare for a soul to reach such a clear stage of hankering for reality as to understand this point. Few souls are to be found in this world who are really conscious of their innermost necessity, who realize, "We want Krsna! We want Vrndavana!" Such sincere souls are not easily found. This is mentioned in many places in scripture. (manusyanam sahasresu...narayana parayana... brahmananam sahasrebyo....)

There is only one end - many are not necessary - only one, the one, that very one we want, is a relationship of divine love.

An intellectual understanding of Krsna consciousness is impossible. Just as a bee cannot taste honey by licking the outside of a glass jar, one cannot enter the domain of higher spirit through the intellect. As subjects we are subordinate to the Supreme Subject. So there must be seva, service. Seva is the all- important factor. In the Bhagavad-gita it is mentioned that pranipata, respectfully approaching, pariprasna, sincerely inquiring, and seva, an attitude of service are necessary to enter into the domain of divine love. Only by service will Krsna be satisfied and come down, only then will we be able to understand the nature of higher plane. This is Vedic knowledge.

We are tatastha-sakti, marginal potency, and if we want to know any truth about higher reality, we must realize that it is more subtle than our existence, it is super-subjective: It can touch us, but we cannot climb up to that domain out of our own sweet will. Only if we are given the grace which can take us up can we go.

One who has this understanding will be able to combat all the existing intellectualists. The intellect has no capacity to enter into the higher subjective area. That supreme truth is atindriya-manasa-gocarah: beyond the plane of the senses, mind, and intellect. This expression manaso vapuso vaco vaibhavam tava gocarah by Brahma, admitting to Krsna that He was beyond the reach of his body, mind, and words, was not only a lip-deep statement of the mouth. If we want to know the absolute truth, the only condition for realizing Him is a submissive attitude. In that way, He may be satisfied with our attempt and reveal Himself to us. Divine revelation is not a matter of research within this world - we should have a sincere heart to serve.

The scientists are discovering so many wonderful things. But are these things there already? Or are the scientists the creators? Those

wonderful truths are already there. It is only that some of them are being discovered. It is not the creation of the scientists, so they are not superior to those truths. And in any case, they can know only a part of it, and even that with some endeavor. But the conscious nature of reality, the superior reason of divinity, is unknown to them, although they may go on researching, researching, researching. Whatever they find is only the outer cover, not the real spirit, the substance. Na te viduh svarthagatim hi visnum. In the Srimad-Bhagavatam (7.5.30) it is written:

matir na krsne paratah svato va
mitho 'bhipadyeta grha-vratanam
adanta-gobir visatam tamisram
punah punas carvita-carvananam

Srimad-Bhagavatam tells us that we can try to enter the world of higher reality through intellectualism, but we will again come back, baffled in our attempts. If we try to press with our intelligence to enter into that domain, we will come back dissatisfied in despair and will wander here within this mortal world again and again. The world of sense experience will come and go through its different phases, but it cannot enter that spiritual plane. To enter that world, the only requirement is submission to a real agent of divinity. He may impart the process, and if we can accept that, we will be able to enter that world; otherwise we will have to wander in this world of sense experience.

Some scholars think that knowledge is of the first importance. According to them, if one wants to enter that realm, he should first acquire knowledge through scholarship and then try for love. They think that by knowledge alone we can understand what divine love is, and then we can have admission into that domain. They don't approve of the idea of jnana-sunya bhakti, or "knowledge-free devotion."

Once, the founder of the Bharat Seva Ashram Sangha wanted me to join his mission. I told him, "My head is already sold to the teachings of Sri Caitanyadeva." He said, "Yes, I also revere Him, but I say that first you must learn indifference to this worldly pleasure, as Buddha preached. Then you may come to study the Vedanta of Sankara, understand what is knowledge proper, and realize that all this world is

nothing, and Brahman, spirit, is everything. Then you may approach the prema-dharma, the love of Sri Caitanyadeva, which I also think to be the highest object of attainment." I answered, "You say so, but Sri Caitanyadeva did not say that we should go to the Buddhist school to learn abnegation and then to the Sankara school to acquire Vedantic knowledge before coming to Him. He said that wherever one is, one should get the association of a real Vaisnava saint and go on with sravana-kirtana, hearing and chanting the glories of the Lord." That man was struck dumb. He could not speak; he was silenced.
Another time, the president of the Arya Samaj came to see me in Karachi and told me that, "If the finite can know the Infinite, He is not infinite." I replied, "If the Infinite cannot make Himself known to the finite, He is not infinite." He could not answer my argument.

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So it is not from any qualification on our side that the absolute can be caught. Whomever He chooses to make Himself known to will know Him. This is explained in the Upanisads: He cannot be known by lectures or discussions, by sharp memory or vast intelligence, or by genius or supernatural intellect. One may have extensively studied all the revealed scriptures, but that is no qualification. Krsna reserves all independence on His side. There is only one way by which He can be known: whomever He chooses to make Himself known to can know Him. Otherwise all rights are reserved there by His sweet will.
How can we draw His sweet will? That is the question. How we can tackle His sweet will. That can only be done through saranagati, surrender, by increasing our negative side. We must think, "I am so poor; without Your grace, I can't live." We must think like this to try to arouse pity within His heart. We must appeal to His understanding that we are in extreme need of Him and that without His grace we can't live. Only such a sincere feeling of necessity can draw His attention to us. Otherwise we have no possibility for capturing Him. So the negative approach has been recommended for capturing Him. Our exclusive prayer is that we are the most needy and sincere. That

alone can draw His attention towards us. And that is not an opinion or speculation, it is a fact. It is reality.
I once met a scholarly sannyasi in Badarikasrama who posed as an atheist in the course of our discussion. He argued, "What is the evidence that God or the soul exists?" Then I quoted a verse from Srimad-Bhagavatam (11.22.34):

atma parijnana-mayo vivado
hy astiti nastiti bhidartha-nisthah
vyartho 'pi naivoparameta pumsam
mattah paravrtta-dhiyam sva-lokat

I explained to him that although atma, spirit, is self-effulgent, there is a constant quarrel between two opposing parties. One party says, "God exists!" The other says, "God does not exist!" Srimad-Bhagavatam says that the atma is self-effulgent, but still we find that one class of men say, "He exists, we see Him, He can be seen," and another says, "He has never existed." This quarrel has no end because one of the parties hasn't got the eye to see what is self-evident. This quarrel is a useless waste of time, but still it will never stop; it will continue forever. Why? Because there are those who have the eyes to see God and those who have no eyes to see Him or their own self. One of these classes of men have deviated from God consciousness. There is a barrier between them and God consciousness, between them and self-consciousness. So the disagreement will only continue on account of their ignorance.
Those who have eyes to see will say, "The sun exists; There is the sun." And those who have no eyes will say, "No, no, there is no sun." This argument will continue forever, but that does not mean that the sun is not existing. It can show itself.
An analogy has been given in this connection. A boy is born in a dungeon, a dark prisonhouse. And he grows up there without any experience of sunlight. One of his friends from outside the prison would come and visit him. One day, the boy's friend said, "Let us go see the sun. Come with me, I shall show you." The boy replied, "Yes, I shall go," but he began to take a lantern with him. His friend remarked, "It is not necessary to take the lantern." The boy said, "What do you say! Do you think that I am a fool? Can anything be

seen without the help of a lantern? I am not a fool!" Then his friend forcibly took him by the hand and showed him the sun. The boy said, "Oh, this is the sun! By its light everything can be seen."

The soul is like that. God is like that. He is seen by His own light, and it is only by His light that we can see anything. He is self-effulgent. By His own light He can show Himself to others. He is the source of all knowledge. This is the proper conception of Godhead. He is automatically existing. He cannot be seen by our knowledge, just as the sun cannot be seen by the help of any other light. It is not necessary that we try to acquire God consciousness through intellect or knowledge. Knowledge of God is independent. It can come and go of its own accord. And if He comes to me, every thing comes to me. But nothing can force Him to come within our vision. The sun cannot be taken into your dungeon, but you have to go to the sun and see things by its grace; in the same way, the Lord is self-effulgent. He can be seen only by His own light.

Intellectualism is a disqualification. We are interested in jnana-sunya bhakti, knowledge-free devotion. Affection, attraction, sympathy - these things are all the outcome of having a heart. The scientists feel that animals have no real brain, no intelligence. Yet we see that even without much of a brain, an animal can live, but without a heart, none can live. As the brain is a representation of a computer, the animals have no real computer to calculate. Animals may follow intuitive knowledge, and so they can work unconsciously. And we can see that intuition can go above brain calculation. So many birds and beasts can understand that an earthquake is coming, but so far, no human calculation can understand precisely when an earthquake will come. There are many things that our brain cannot feel, cannot catch, whereas even the animals can get some clue about them beforehand. And after a long and deep research, men cannot find what is beyond their reason. The position of reason and intellect is explained in Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.14.3):

jnane prayasam udapasya namanta eva
jivanti san-mukharitam bhavadiya-vartam
sthane sthitah sruti-gatam tanu-van-manobhir
ye prayaso 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyam

"Hatefully rejecting any attempt in the intellectual line, we must nurture a submissive spirit within ourselves and try to live our lives in association with topics about the Lord. Of course, this does not mean any topics about the Lord; they must come from a genuine source. And it does not matter what position we hold at present. Whoever wholeheartedly attends to the teachings of His divine agents by thought, word, and deed, can conquer Him who is otherwise invincible."

This is the path of realization recommended by the Srimad-Bhagavatam, which condemns the path of intellectual attainment:

sreyah srtim bhaktim udasya te vibho
klisyanti ye kevala-bodha-labdhaye
tesam asau klesala eva sisyate
nanyad yatha sthula-tusavaghatinam

"O Lord, those who want to have a clear conception of You through their intellect find their attempts useless. Their endeavors end only in frustration, like those who try to beat rice from an empty husk." (S.B. 10.14.4) So jnana, knowledge, is like an empty husk. Energy and knowledge are only outer aspects. The real substance, the rice, is devotion - love. That is the tasteful thing within. Other things are covers (jnana-karmady-anavrtam). But what is within the cover is tasteful, eternal, auspicious, and beautiful: satyam, sivam, sundaram. Beauty is reality, ecstasy is reality; everything else is only an outer cover. If we concern ourselves too much with the cover, we cannot get the substance within. Then our life becomes a disappointment:

naiskarmyam apy acyuta-bhava-varjitam
na sobhate jnanam alam niranjanam
kutah punah sasvad abhadram isvare
na carpitam karma yad apy akaranam

"Mere retirement is not considered to be fulfillment in anyone's life. Although in the stage of liberation no contamination of death, birth, disease, and infirmity are to be found, still that cannot be considered perfection. Then what to speak of karma, a laborious life of work which is not done for the satisfaction of Krsna?" (S.B. 1.5.12)

The only thing that can give fulfillment in both labor and rest is Krsna: He is the harmonizing principle of both. If work is done as a service for Krsna, then our labor is converted into gold: it is no longer iron. And only if renunciation is related to divine service does it have any value.

Adam and Eve

Those who are suffering from hard labor naturally want rest. They are dependent on labor to live, yet it is thought to be useless and undesirable: if we are to live, we must labor; still, it is considered a dishonorable life. Generally our aspiration is how to live without labor; we are in search of a peaceful life of rest where we are not the servants of labor. This is the general tendency in our life of struggle and labor. In the Bible, we find that when Adam and Eve were surrendered to God in heaven, their sustenance was automatic; when they fell down, they had to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. They were forced to labor in order to live. And it is a low and dishonorable form of life. But if we want to live, we must labor. We wonder, "Is there a life where one can live without labor?" We find such a tendency in our life from the beginning of existence. So we aspire for freedom from karma.

Buddha and Shankar

Both the Buddhist school and the Sankara school want to discover a place where one can live without labor. Buddha says that life itself is unnecessary; that there is in actuality no labor, no life, no existence. According to the Buddhist school, we can do away with our existence. It is a mania to keep up our existence in the struggling world, so we should do away with this mania. Why should we live at all? So the Buddhists advocate nirvana, the cessation of existence.

And Sankaracarya says, "Of course there is life, but this life is not desirable. We are always suffering from injury, and there is a force

which is always diminishing us, and ultimately we die. We are challenged by slow death, slow poison." It is true that life in the world of mortality is undesirable. Then what is the solution? Sankara says that the endeavor to maintain one's individual self is undesirable. There is no possibility of maintaining individuality and at the same time enjoying real peace, eternal peace. So we shall have to give up the charm of individual life.

According to Sankara, there is one Universal Spirit, and that is a blissful conception. We are merely reflections of that. That Spirit has been reflected everywhere. Somehow it has created this mysterious individual ego or consciousness. We must not be very eager to maintain this false ego; we must dissolve it. And when that is done, we shall find that only Spirit remains.

In our present condition there can be no cure to the disease of mortality. At every moment we are losing ourselves in some way or other. This cannot be solved. But Buddha and Sankara have given only a partial understanding. But Srimad-Bhagavatam says, "The proper solution is to practice abnegation, detachment from the environment, by seeing it in relation to the service of Krsna. That knowledge by which you can attain perfection while maintaining your own individuality, interest, and prospect is possible only with bhakti, devotion, dedication. By exploitation you have to die. And by abnegation you merge into a sort of zero (Viraja, Brahmaloka) in some unknown quarter, never to rise from there again. But I recommend the kind of renunciation and knowledge which is embraced by devotion, dedication to Krsna. If you accept that, then your inner self, your true self, can live forever in a happy life."

Naiskarmyam means no pain of labor. A labor of love is the innate function of the soul. In our ordinary conception, labor carries a reaction. As we labor, things diminish and vanish, attacked by death. But these difficulties have all been eliminated by the recommendations given in Srimad-Bhagavatam. Srimad-Bhagavatam advocates vairagya and jnana embraced with bhakti, a life of dedication. Bhagavatam says, "Shake off exploitation and renunciation. You will not have to depend on them. They can be absorbed by dedication. Renunciation and knowledge are complete in devotion, and at the same time you can maintain your individuality. "

Srimad-Bhagavatam has harmonized knowledge and renunciation by supplying their very life in devotion. Through devotion, we can maintain our individuality, our activity, our prospect, and at the same time find immense peace and ecstasy in life. Srimad-Bhagavatam offers us a happy, eternal life simply by adding dedication to jnana and karma.

You will work, or energize; but it will not come under the jurisdiction of karma, which has a reaction. Your energy will be used for the center. Bhagavad-gita tells us, "Work only for the center, otherwise you will be tied down with a reaction." So it has been made clear that a very laudable life is possible for us if we dedicate ourselves to the highest center. That is neither dishonorable nor tiresome. Neither is it ignorance. So we should take this course which Srimad-Bhagavatam recommends for us.

If we are attentive to that and try to follow the advice coming from the real source, from real saintly persons, we will become properly adjusted; we will develop a proper understanding. And everything will be harmonized. One who has this realization will be victorious over all possible suggestions or conceptions of knowledge. Only by devotion, by dedication to Krsna, can we very easily become free from ignorance in the world of suffering.

To be a devotee means to serve; service is everything. Our proper life is to be found in dedicating ourselves and in self-distribution, not self-aggrandizement. We can live in service. All difficulties will be removed if we take to the line of dedication. There we will find everything: our individuality, the most favorable environment, our highest prospect. Only our angle of vision should be changed. And that angle of vision should be acquired through the center. We must try to understand how everything will be seen in relation to the center. Whatever we see, we must try to study its position in accordance with the center. We must locate or calculate what its position is in relation to the center. And with that angle of vision, we may establish our relationship to anything. If we can develop this vision, we will get relief from all undesirability. This is the teaching of Srimad-Bhagavatam.

This is the specialty of Bhagavata philosophy. It always tries to establish the conception of divine love, divine sentiment, and divine feeling above intellectualism and the mastery over energy. The

masters of power and the masters of knowledge have no value if devoid of the master of love. On the other hand, if it is possible for one devoid of knowledge and power to enter into the area of love, his life is successful. His movement is no longer considered as reactionary labor (karma), and his knowledge is real knowledge about Krsna (sambandha-jnana). Real knowledge about Krsna, His paraphernalia, and who is who in the spiritual world, is not within the jurisdiction of the knowledge that we can obtain by conducting scientific research. It is not like that; it is fulfilled in itself.

And Devarsi Narada came to Vedavyasa to recommend to him, "You must introduce this very clearly in your present book. In the Vedas and Upanisads and in the Mahabharata you have dealt previously with different aspects of knowledge and work. But it is not so clear. And now very clearly and definitely you should describe the success of life in its fullest form, independent of knowledge and energy." It is possible to reinstate ourselves with our lost wealth independent of energy and intellectual research.

The Seal of Ego

We have only to break the seal of the ego, and the natural flow of divine love will come and automatically help its own cause. Such an arrangement is there for us by which we may return home. We won't feel that it is a tedious, laborious journey. We will be carried by our natural attraction, independent of external guidance. The tendency within us for divine love can understand its own soil; it has that natural gift of attraction. An automatic attraction will be there for our home; no scientific search is necessary.

Rather, we will have to put a stop to our intellectualism, ambition, and aspiration. It is unnecessary. It is a wild goose chase. It will never help us to reach our goal. The heart will reject that. There will be no room for any suspicion at all. It is an infallible, natural, complete selection. So we should try to find that natural thing which cannot be acquired as the result of any long program of research. It is quite natural. It is only the artificialism within us that must be removed and bid adieu forever.

And the reactions that we have acquired after so long in our false journey will evaporate out of their own accord. They will present no problem. This is certain. There will be no reaction, and no necessity of finding any new discovery or invention. Once achieving that realization, we will see that our "progressive-knowledge-civilization" is all redundant.

No intellectualism is required. Just as a child knows his mother, we can recognize our real home. In the midst of so many cows, a calf will run to its own mother. They have some instinctive scent or a natural guidance that directs them. In the same way, no trouble, no investigation, no experiment or suspicion is necessary. Devotion to Krsna is automatic, natural, happy, and spontaneous. It is a spontaneous life, an automatic flow, a natural movement.

Our real interest is love. Love is independent of everything. It is the innermost substance in our existence. "Try to dive deep into reality," we are told. "Dive deep into reality, and you will find your home there in that divine realm. You are a child of that soil." That is the message of Srimad-Bhagavatam and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. And that is not a very meager conception, an abstract or hazy dream, but that is the most intense and concrete reality.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu demonstrated this by His character, by how intensely He searched for Sri Krsna, and by how intensely and deeply He engaged Himself in the lila of Krsna, ignoring so many facts which seem concrete in the outside world. Forgetting everything, despising everything which is so important to us, He neglected all other functions and considerations of duty. He engaged Himself in krsna-lila so deeply and intensely - diving deep into it - that it captured His whole heart so much that He was externally found to be helpless.

Eighth Chapter

The Holy Name

Srila Rupa Goswami

"Rupa Goswami Prabhupada says that Krsna's name, form, qualities, and eternal associates everything about Him - is not mundane, but purely spiritual. It cannot be perceived by our gross senses. Simply by vibrating the sound krsna, our tongues cannot produce Krsna, our noses cannot catch the transcendental fragrance of His body, our eyes cannot have a vision of His beautiful figure which is supramental. This is true not only for our physical senses, but for the mind also. Our minds cannot conceive of Krsna. He is transcendental and supramental. His existence transcends all the knowledge in our possession."

Sri Nityananda and Sriman Mahaprabhu

If it is to be effective, the sound of the holy name of Krsna must have a divine quality. The holy name of Krsna which is infinite can do away with everything undesirable within us; but the name must be invested with a real spiritual conception. It must not be a mere physical imitation produced only by the help of the lip and tongue.

That sound is not the holy name. If it is to be genuine, the holy name of Krsna, Hari, Visnu, or Narayana must be vaikuntha-nama: it should have spiritual existence, divine backing. That principle is all in all in vibrating the holy name.

We are concerned with sound vibration that has spiritual depth. The physical imitation of the holy name is not the name proper; it is not sabda brahma, divine sound. Only imitation sound may come from the plane of mundane conception. The holy name of Krsna means divine sound; it must have some spiritual background. Something spiritual must be distributed through the physical sound.

In the case of a capsule of medicine, the capsule is not the medicine; the medicine is within. Externally, one capsule may look like another, but within one capsule there may be medicine and within another there may be cyanide. The capsule itself is not the medicine. So it is not the sound of Krsna's name that is Krsna: Krsna is within the sound. The holy name must be surcharged with the proper spirit, not any mundane sentiment.

Even the followers of the impersonal Sankara school have faith that the name is not confined within the jurisdiction of physical sound. They consider it to be within the mental plane, within the plane of sattva guna. Unfortunately they think that the holy name is the product of maya, or misconception, and so they conclude that the names of Hari, Krsna, Kali, and Siva are all one and the same. The Ramakrishna Mission and the Sankara school both preach in that way. But that conception also has its origin in the plane of misunderstanding.

Divine Sound

The divine sound of the pure name (suddha-nama) must have its origin beyond the area of misconception or maya. The extent of maya is up to the highest planet in the material world, Satyaloka. Beyond Satyaloka is the Viraja river and the world of consciousness, Brahmaloka, and then the spiritual sky, Paravyoma. The pure name of Krsna must have its origin in Paravyoma, the spiritual sky. And if we are to examine it further, the holy name of Krsna really comes from the most original plane of all existence: Vraja, Goloka. According to

this understanding, the sound must have its origin in the highest plane of the spiritual world in Vrndavana if it is to be considered the genuine Krsna name.

The mere physical sound is not the holy name of Krsna. A true conception of the holy name is necessary, not only to free us from this world of misconception, but also for the attainment of service to Krsna in Vrndavana. Only that true name of Krsna which has its origin in the plane of Vrndavana can lift us up and take us there.

Otherwise, although the spirit is within the name, if the sound we vibrate is based on any other conception, it may only take us to that layer of conception. This is quite scientific; it is not unreasonable. The mere word krsna is not the holy name. What is important is the meaning of that sound and the depth of meaning, the deep conception of the meaning of the name. That is everything - it is all-important in serving our purpose.

There's a nice story that illustrates this point. When our spiritual master, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura, was a young boy, both he and his father, Bhaktivinoda Thakura, went to visit the holy place of Kulinagrama, which is located in the Hooghly district near Calcutta. Kulinagrama was a village where the great devotee Haridasa Thakura, as well as other famous Vaisnavas, used to live, and was the home of four generations of devotees.

A Haunted Temple

They went to visit that ancient holy place, and just on the outskirts of Kulinagrama, as they were entering the village, they passed by an old temple. Suddenly a man came out of the temple and humbly asked them, "Please stay the night here. In the morning you may enter the village and take darsana of all the places there." Bhaktivinoda Thakura and our guru maharaja, who at that time was a young boy, stayed the night in that temple house.

Just after nightfall, as they were resting, Bhaktivinoda Thakura experienced something unusual. He found that brickbats were being thrown about from different directions. He thought, "How is this happening and why? Who would throw big brickbats like this?" Then

he had some apprehension that there might be ghosts living there, creating disturbances. He began loudly chanting the Hare Krsna maha-mantra. After some time, the disturbance disappeared, and Bhaktivinoda Thakura and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta passed the rest of the night there peacefully.

In the morning, they entered the village and began visiting different holy places. After some time, one of the local gentlemen noticed them and said, "You entered our village early this morning. Where do you come from? And where did you spend the night?" Bhaktivinoda Thakura explained, "We stayed in that temple just outside the village there." One of them said, "Oh! How could you stay there? So many ghosts live there and throw stones and bricks at anyone who passes by that place at night. How could you stay there?" Then Bhaktivinoda Thakura said, "Yes, you are right. But when I found such a disturbance there, I began to loudly chant the Hare Krsna maha-mantra, and subsequently the problem disappeared." The men of the village then asked Bhaktivinoda, "Who are you, and where are you coming from?"

Then they came to know that he was Bhaktivinoda Thakura. They had already heard of him, and some of them had read his books. They welcomed the two of them, and showed them all the holy places they had not yet seen. At one point, they said to Bhaktivinoda Thakura, "The gentleman who was formerly the priest of that temple was transformed into a ghost after his departure. Since that time, we have regularly seen the disturbances caused by that ghost. Why did he become a ghost? As the priest of that temple, he used to regularly chant the holy name of Krsna. We are witness to that fact; we have all heard him. Why was he turned into a ghost? We cannot understand this. Please explain."

Lip-Deep Sound

Bhaktivinoda Thakura told them that the priest must have only repeated the syllables of the name, the nama-aksara. What he was producing was only a mayik sound, a physical, lip-deep sound. It did not have the spiritual essence; the life of the name was absent when he

was chanting. It was nama-aparadha, offensive chanting. Bhaktivinoda asked them, "What was his character?" They said, "He was not a good man. He committed many sinful acts. That we know. But we can't deny the fact that he used to chant the name of the Lord almost always.

How could he become a ghost?"

Bhaktivinoda Thakura explained that the physical sound of the name is not the name proper. The priest had been committing offenses to the holy name (nama-aparadha), and as a result became a ghost. They asked, "Then how can he be released from that wretched condition?" Bhaktivinoda said, "If he meets a bona fide sadhu who has a genuine connection with Krsna, and he hears the real name, or the proper explanation of Bhagavad-gita or Srimad-Bhagavatam from his lips, then he may be released from his ghostly condition. It is mentioned in the scriptures that this is the only way to become free from the entanglement of material nature." After this discussion, Bhaktivinoda Thakura and Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati left Kulinagrama.

From that day on, all the troubles caused by the ghost at the temple in Kulinagrama ceased. The villagers were astonished. One of them said: "That priest who had become a ghost must have been released from his ghostly condition after hearing the holy name chanted by Bhaktivinoda Thakura. When the trouble began, Bhaktivinoda loudly chanted the name, and gradually, by hearing the holy name of Krsna from his holy lips, that suppressed soul has been liberated from his condition as a ghost."

After that, many people journeyed to see Bhaktivinoda Thakura. They would tell him, "We are confident that you are a great Vaisnava - after hearing the holy name of Krsna from your lips, a ghost has been released." This story was published in the newspapers, and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Prabhupada used to recount this story of his own experience with Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

The point is that simply the external sound of the name is not the real name. The most important thing is the spiritual realization backing the name - that is the real name. Otherwise, a tape recorder can pronounce that holy name of Krsna. Even a parrot can pronounce the name - but the physical sound is not the thing itself. In the background there must be spiritual truth, which is conscious. That super-knowledge is beyond the knowledge of this mundane plane.

Supramental Nama

This understanding is confirmed by Rupa Goswami Prabhu in his verse:

atah sri-krsna-namadi
na bhaved grahyam indriyaih
sevonmukhe hi jihvadau
svayam eva sphuraty adah

He says that Krsna's name, form, qualities, and eternal associates everything about Him - is not mundane, but purely spiritual. It cannot be perceived by our gross senses. Simply by vibrating the sound krsna, our tongues cannot produce Krsna, our noses cannot catch the transcendental fragrance of His body, our eyes cannot have a vision of His beautiful figure which is supramental. This is true not only for our physical senses, but for the mind also. Our minds cannot conceive of Krsna. He is transcendental and supramental. His existence transcends all the knowledge in our possession.
We cannot be the subject and make Krsna our object. He is the subject. He exists beyond both the atma and paramatma. We should never forget that. We should always be mindful of the plane in which He exists. As finite souls we are tatastha jivas - the marginal potency of the Lord. The tiny soul can think and know only those things which are more gross than himself. But in trying to know that which is more subtle than himself, he is helpless. A connection with that higher spiritual realm is only possible when the higher area wants to bring the lower up into that plane. Therefore, to understand Him is possible only through surrender (sevonmukhe hi jihvadau).

Divine Slavery

If we can accept the current of surrender - if we can die as we are and surrender our innermost self at His disposal - His will can easily carry us up to the spiritual platform. Our soul will become as a blade of grass in that current, and so be carried up into the center of the infinite. It is not that we can enter there and walk proudly as we do here in this gross material world. Here we walk on our feet, but there we shall walk with our heads. Only by the Lord's grace upon our heads can we attract that plane to take us up.

Everything there is qualitatively higher than our own existence. The substance of that divine realm, the atmosphere, the air, the ether - everything there - is higher than any value we might have. Only those with a sincere spirit of service may be allowed to enter there. And there they will be taken to the highest position of divine love by the residents of that plane, who are venerable, generous, affectionate, and filled with good wishes.

We have as our prospect the chance to go there, but always as a matter of grace - and never as a matter of right. We must accept this creed from the beginning. Still, the atmosphere there is so happy and loving that no one there feels any distinction between slave and master. A slave there has no sense of being a slave. Everyone is family. Having attained the state of divine slavery, one should consider: "I am a slave - the generosity of Krsna and His eternal associates is my wealth. " But by the power of Yogamaya, those who are taken up into that plane forget that they are slaves. That is the greatness and magnanimity of that atmosphere where love is intensely flowing. It is really by their love and not by our own fortune that we may somehow gain entrance into that high and noble land.

But to realize this we must realize the spiritual position of Krsna's name, form, and eternal associates. Krsna's name is not material. We cannot capture the name of Krsna simply by vibrating the syllables of the name with our tongue. Ravana wanted to capture Sitadevi and thought that he had done so. But the fact was that he could not even touch the holy body of Sitadevi.

What Ravana captured was only a mundane representation of Sitadevi, a material double, an imitation which was like a statue of Sitadevi. Sitadevi herself is another thing; she is not made of flesh and blood. For a person here in this world, Sitadevi and her divine plane is not at all approachable. A mundane person cannot see, feel, or enter that

plane - what to speak of the possibility of snatching Sitadevi and taking her away. The scriptures have explained that Sita's capture was all show. Ravana was cheated. Of course, the apparent kidnapping of Sita by Ravana was done to serve some purpose, to teach something to the people of this mundane world. But in the real sense, no Ravana can come in connection with any of the eternal associates of the Lord who are living in Vaikuntha. In the same way, no mundane person can touch the Vaikuntha Name simply by imitating its sound.

Recently I was asked about a young boy who had been killed in an accident. I was told that he shouted the name of Krsna at the time of death. I was asked "What was his destination?" I explained that whether one is young or old in the plane of flesh and blood is no qualification for spiritual attainment. One's mentality must be examined. According to the particular time and place and the conception of the person involved, that sound may be the genuine name, or it may be namabhasa, the shadow of the real name.

National Nama

When Gandhi was shot, he cried, "Rama! Rama!" He was shot in the chest, and his spectacles were thrown into the street. Within half an hour he passed away, but he pronounced the words "Rama! Rama!" He was on his way to deliver a religious lecture, but his mentality was full of thoughts of national progress, so in his case, the vibration of the name may have worked in the plane of nation-building. To understand a person's destination at the time of death, we must ask, "What was his mentality?"

Sometimes chanting the name may result in namabhasa - the shadow of the name. Whether or not it is suddha nama, the genuine name, depends on the mental system of the person chanting the name. It depends on his relation towards Krsna, his intention.

"Gopi, Gopi, Gopi!"

A few days before Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu took sannyasa, He was chanting "gopi, gopi, gopi!" Hearing this, a tantric brahmana came to give some advice to the Lord. "Pandit," he said, "You are a scholar; You know the scriptures. Still, You are chanting the name gopi, gopi? What benefit will You get from that? The scriptures say that if You chant the name of Krsna, You may get some benefit. You will find this in many places in the scriptures, especially in the Puranas. Why then do You chant gopi, gopi?"

Angered at the brahmana's ignorance, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, in the mood of a follower of the gopis, picked up a stick and began to rebuke him. "You have come from the enemy camp to convert us into followers of Krsna?" He ran after the brahmana to beat him with His stick. In this example, we find that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was chanting "gopi, gopi" and neglecting the name of Krsna. Apparently He was advised to take the name of Krsna and became enraged - but what is the underlying thought there?

If we are to understand the effect of someone's chanting of the holy name, we must examine his underlying purpose. Sometimes his chanting may have some effect, but not always. Still, Jiva Goswami mentions the following example as evidence that the holy name may have some effect even if one is unaware of its full meaning. Once, a wild boar attacked a Mohammedan, and the Mohammedan cried, "Harama! Harama!" Harama means "that abominable hog!" On the other hand, Ha Rama means "the Lord," who has allowed a hog to attack me. Somehow, Lord Rama was invoked, and the holy name had a divine influence on the Mohammedan, who attained liberation.

Another example given in the scriptures is that of Valmiki. Before becoming a saint, the sage Valmiki was a dacoit. But the great saint Narada had a plan to benefit him. Narada thought, "This person is the most notorious and heinous dacoit I have ever seen. Let me experiment with him to see the potency of the holy name. I shall ask him to chant the holy name of Rama." He tried, but Valmiki could not pronounce the holy name of Rama. Then Narada told him to chant mara - the word for "murder" - instead. The dacoit said, "Yes, I can do this. This is just the opposite of the name of Rama." He began to chant "mara-mara-mara-mara-rama-rama-rama-rama." In this way, after some time, mara became rama. Valmiki began to chant the name of Rama, and gradually his mental attitude changed. So it is possible for

the name to have an effect on someone even if he has no proper conception of its meaning. This is called namabhasa: the shadow of the name. It can effect liberation. But a real devotee is not interested in liberation. He wants to enter the domain of divine service.

The sound and its effect depends upon the attitude we accept, and the quality we can conceive, because the actual vaikuntha nama is infinite. In that plane, the divine name is equal to the substance named. When the sound aspect is one and the same with the original aspect of the thing, that is vaikuntha nama. Here in this world, a blind man's name may be Padmalocan - lotus-eyed - but really he may be blind. The name and the figure may be entirely different. But in Vaikuntha, in the infinite world, the name and the named are one and the same.

Yet to experience the vaikuntha nama, one must avoid both nama aparadha, offenses to the holy name, and namabhasa, the shadow of the holy name. By namabhasa, we get some relief from this worldly bondage, and by nama aparadha, we become entangled in this mayik world. But the ordinary physical sound cannot represent the real name, which is supernatural.

It is said that one name of Krsna can remove more ignorance and sin than a man has the power to commit. But what is the quality of that one name? We may chant the physical name of Krsna so many times without getting the result of even one real name. There is a great difference between the ordinary sound of the name, the superficial mayik name, and the pure name. The pure name is one and the same with Krsna, but that descends down to our level only by His grace. We cannot vibrate it simply by dint of our moving our tongue and our lips. The pure name of Krsna is not lip deep, but heart deep. And it ultimately goes beyond the heart and reaches the land of Krsna. When Krsna comes down, the name Krsna comes through the heart and moves the lips and tongue. That vibration is the holy name of Krsna, krsna nama.

Negative Power

When Krsna in the form of sound descends from the transcendental world into the heart, and from the heart, controlling every aspect of

the nervous system, comes to the lips and begins dancing there, that is krsna nama. The initiative is in the transcendental world. That sound is not produced from the physical plane. The spiritual sound has to come down into this plane; He can come down, but we cannot so easily go up there. He is the Supersubject; we are an object to Him. We cannot interfere with His independence. Only by the negative power of surrender can we attract the Supreme Positive to come down to our level.

And so the holy name is not a production of our senses. It can be realized only when we approach Him with a very intense serving attitude. At that time, Krsna Himself may come down by His grace, being attracted by our serving nature. Then He can influence this element and produce transcendental sound and dance within the mundane plane. That is the holy name, the vaikuntha nama, the real name of Krsna. We cannot produce it with our lips. The sound we create with our physical or mental production is not Krsna. He is independent from whatever sound we may produce, and yet, because He controls everything, He can appear anywhere, in any form, in any plane, in any sound.

And this is confirmed in Bhagavad-gita (4.6). Krsna says, "When I come here by the power of My internal potency, I remove the external potency's influence and appear anywhere and everywhere." The mundane wave is forced back, just as a plane rides in the sky and pushes back the influence of air and wind as it forcibly passes. By removing the influence of the material waves, He appears within this world by the strength of His own force.

The Lord says, "I have My own potency, and by the power of that potency, I remove this gross material energy. And so I live and move here in this world." The laws of material nature cannot apply to Him. He has special power. And with the help of that special power, He subdues the laws of material nature and comes here. He does whatever He wants with His own potency. Wherever He goes, the laws of material nature withdraw from that place and give Him His way. In this way, He can appear within the realm of sound as the holy name.

The real importance of the name is not to be found merely in the arrangement of its syllables, but in the deep meaning within that divine sound. Some scholars argue that in the Kali-santarana Upanisad, Lord Brahma says that the Hare Krsna maha-mantra is

properly pronounced only when the name of Rama precedes the name of Krsna: "**Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare/ Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare**."

Krishna Nama

In the Kali-santarana Upanisad, the Hare Krsna maha-mantra is given in that way. But to say that the name of Rama must precede the name of Krsna in the mantra is a superficial understanding. It is said that because it comes from the Upanisads, the Hare Krsna mantra is a Vedic mantra, and therefore, because the ordinary people may not have any entrance into Vedic mantras, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu readjusted this mantra by reversing the order of the words. In that way, it is said, the concern that it is a Vedic mantra is thereby canceled, and so Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu gave it to all without breaching the injunctions of the Vedas. Some devotees in Uttar Pradesh who have great affection for Sri Caitanyadeva like to give this opinion.

But our faith is that the mentioning of "Hare Rama" first is only superficial. It concerns the idea that since the Rama avatara appeared first and the Krsna avatara afterwards, the name of Rama, "Hare Rama," should come first in the maha-mantra. A deeper reading will consider that when two similar things are connected together, the priority will be ordered not on the basis of historical precedent, but in consideration of the most highly developed conception. The holy name of Krsna is higher than the holy name of Rama. This is mentioned in the Puranas: three names of Rama equal one name of Krsna. The name of Krsna is superior to the name of Rama. Where the two are connected together, the first position should be given to the one that is superior. Therefore, the name of Krsna must come first in the maha-mantra.

This is one point. Another point is that within the eternal plane, everything is moving in a cyclic order. In an eternal cycle, which is first and which is next cannot be ascertained, and so, in the eternal plane of lila, it cannot be determined whether Krsna is before Rama or Rama is before Krsna. So from that consideration also, since the

names of Krsna and Rama are eternal and unrelated to any historical event, we may begin the mantra from any place.

Rama Means Krishna

But above these considerations, our sampradaya has given another, higher consideration. A deeper understanding will reveal that the Hare Krsna mantra is not at all concerned with rama lila. In the name of Rama within the Hare Krsna mantra, the Gaudiya Vaisnavas will find Radha-ramana Rama. That means "Krsna, who gives pleasure (raman) to Srimati Radharani." In our conception, the Hare Krsna mantra is wholesale Krsna consciousness, not Rama consciousness. Sri Caitanya's highest conception of things is always svayam bhagavan, krsna lila, radha-govinda lila. That is the real purpose of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's advent and teachings. In that consideration, the Hare Krsna mantra does not mention the rama lila of Ayodhya at all. There is no connection with that in the highest conception of the Hare Krsna mantra.

And the inner conception of the mantra is responsible for our spiritual attainment. When one pronounces the name Rama, if he means Dasarathi Rama, his attraction will take him there, to Ayodhya; if he means Parasurama, he will be attracted to another place. And if Rama means Radha-ramana Rama, he will go to Goloka. The inner conception of the devotee will guide him to his destination.

My original name was Ramendra Candra. When I was given initiation, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura gave me the name Ramendra Sundara. I asked him, "What is the meaning of Ramendra?" He told me, "In our consideration, Rama does not mean Dasarathi Rama or Lord Ramacandra, the son of King Dasaratha. It means Radha-ramana Rama - Krsna, the lover of Radharani."

The name "Hare" may also mean different things according to one's conception. That the meaning of the word Hare in the mantra is taken to mean Radharani is also determined according to the spiritual development or qualification (adhikara) of the chanter. When one is firmly established in conceiving of Radha-Krsna in the background of everything - when one finds svayam-rupa, the original form of

Godhead, underlying all sorts of conceptions of all things good - then only will he find that sort of meaning and nothing else.

For beginners, the word "Hare" in the Hare Krsna mantra can be conceived to mean Hari. That is one meaning. It may also mean Nrsimhadeva. And just as "Rama" can mean Dasarathi Rama, "Krsna" may refer to different types of Krsna. There is also a Krsna in Vaikuntha, where the vaibhavas, or extensions of the Lord, number twenty-four. In Vaikuntha, first there is Narayana, and then four extensions: Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha. Each of these four has five agents, making twenty-four in all. One of these is the Krsna of Vaikuntha. Then there is the Krsna of Dvaraka and the Krsna of Mathura.

In this way there are various conceptions of Krsna. But the highest conception of Krsna is Krsna in Vrndavana: Radha-Govinda. When one cannot remove himself from that plane, he will conceive of divinity only as Hari-Hara. He will see nothing else but Radha-Krsna. Those who are completely and perfectly installed in madhura-rasa - who have the highest kind of divine vision - cannot come down from that plane. If they do, it is only for the interest of Radha-Govinda. In that case, the devotee may go anywhere, but his real interest is under lock and key in Vrndavana. Only on behalf of the service of Radha-Govinda will a devotee leave Vrndavana.

For those who are followers of the Vrndavana line, "Hare" in the Hare Krsna mantra can only mean Hara: Srimati Radharani. Hara means "Radha, who can even snatch the attention of Krsna, Hari." The word harana means "to steal. " One who can steal the mind of He who is most expert in stealing - who can steal even the mind of Krsna - She is Hara. Stealing in its highest capacity is shown by Radharani. And "Krsna" means "He who is most attractive in the absolute sense." They are both represented in the mantra.

Rupanuga Nama

The followers of the rupanuga sampradaya can never deviate from that consciousness in their chanting of the maha-mantra. And with this conception, they go on with the service of Hari-Hara, Radha-Krsna.

They absorb themselves in radha dasyam. They cannot think of anything else but that. And once having fully attained that plane, they can never come down from that level, from the interest of Radha-Krsna. They cannot allow themselves to be out of that circle.
That is the position of our highest aspiration, and according to a devotee's adhikara, or spiritual qualification, that sort of meaning will awaken in one's mind. It will be awakened, discovered by sadhana. At that time the covering of the heart will be removed and divine love will spontaneously spring up from the fountain of the heart as the inner function of the soul.

Ninth Chapter

The Service Of Sri Radha

Sri Sri Gauranga Gandharva Govinda-sundara
Deities of the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

"The Gaudiya Vaisnavas know only Radharani They are concerned only with Her and Her duties, Her necessities. They are ready to serve Her in all respects, and cannot contemplate any service without Her. That is the highest achievement of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas, that is the special feature of Mahaprabhu's party, and that was announced by Raghunatha Dasa Goswami."

"There is a hope which is sustaining me and nurturing my existence. With that hope I am somehow passing my days. But my patience has reached its end. I can't endure it any longer. At this moment if You do not show Your grace to me, Sri Radha, I shall lose my prospect forever. I shall have no desire to continue my life. And Vrndavana, which is even dearer to me than my life itself - I am disgusted with it. And what to speak of anything else, I am even disgusted with Krsna. It is shameful to utter such words, but I can have no love even for Krsna unless and until You take me within Your confidential camp of service."

Raghunatha Dasa

Once, the Diwan of Bharatpur had come on a pilgrimage with his family to the holiest of places, Sri Radha-kunda, the holy lake of Srimati Radharani. He and his family were circumambulating Radha-kunda. They would fall flat on the ground, offering obeisances lying down with their arms outstretched. Every time they bowed down in this way, they would mark the spot where their fingertips touched the earth. Then they would slowly rise, step forward to where that spot had been marked, and again fall flat, offering their obeisances with great respect and adoration. In this way they were circumambulating the entire Radha-kunda. Upon seeing such intense worship, Paramananda Prabhu, an intimate disciple of our guru maharaja Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura, intimated to Prabhupada that the Diwan and his family must have great respect for Radharani to circumambulate the Radha-kunda in such a fashion.

At that time Prabhupada said, "Their angle of vision towards Radha-kunda and Radharani is different from ours. They recognize and revere Krsna. And because Radharani is Krsna's favorite, they also have some reverence for Radha-kunda. But our vision is just the opposite. Our concern is with Radharani. And only because She wants Krsna do we have any connection with Him."

And so, the Gaudiya Vaisnavas know only Radharani. They are concerned only with Her, and Her duties, Her necessities. They are ready to serve Her in all respects, and cannot contemplate any service without Her. That is the highest achievement of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas, that is the special feature of Mahaprabhu's party, and that was announced by Raghunatha Dasa Goswami in his Vilapa-kusumanjali (102):

asabharair-amrta-sindhu-mayaih kathancit
kalo mayatigamitah kila sampratam hi
tvam cet krpam mayi vidhasyasi naiva kim me
pranair vraje na ca varoru bakarinapi

This verse is a direct prayer to Radharani. It expresses a particular type of hope which is so sweet and reassuring that it is compared with an unlimited ocean of nectar. He says, "There is a hope which is sustaining me and nurturing my existence. With that hope I am somehow passing my days, dragging my life through these tedious times. That nectarine ocean of hope is attracting me and keeping me alive. But my patience has reached its end. I can't endure it any longer. I can't wait any more. "At this moment if You do not show Your grace to me, I am finished. I shall lose my prospect forever. I shall have no desire to continue my life. It will all be useless. Without Your grace, I can't stand to live another moment. And Vrndavana, which is even dearer to me than my life itself - I am disgusted with it. It is painful; it is always pinching me. And what to speak of anything else, I am even disgusted with Krsna. It is shameful to utter such words, but I can have no love even for Krsna unless and until You take me within Your confidential camp of service." This is the prayer of Raghunatha Dasa.

When Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada would begin to explain this verse, his figure would become transformed. He would

become full of emotion; his face would become like that of a phantom.

In this verse, Raghunatha Dasa Goswami, taking an extreme risk, says, "O Radha, if I do not get Your favor, I don't want anything. I want You and You alone. To have an independent relationship with anyone else, eliminating You, is impossible in my life. You must be first, and then others. Without You, we can never even think of a separate relationship with Krsna." Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja has written that without Radharani's company, Krsna is not beautiful. Everything is relative - dependent. A teacher depends on the student, and the student depends on his teacher. Although Krsna is the enjoyer, He is completely dependent on the enjoyed, Srimati Radharani. The two are correlative; one cannot be separated from the other. As the enjoyed, Radharani is also absolutely dependent on Krsna, the enjoyer.

Radharani says, "My fate is lost forever because I have given Myself, I have sold Myself to many places. When I heard the flute, I dedicated Myself to the song of the flute. When I heard the name of Krsna, I dedicated Myself to that sound. And when I saw a beautiful picture of Krsna, I wholly dedicated Myself to that picture. So in three places I have sold Myself completely, with no possibility of any happiness or peace in My life. If I had dedicated Myself to only one thing, there might have been a possibility of peace, but because I have dedicated Myself in three different places, I am hopeless.

"Seeing the picture of Krsna, I couldn't contain Myself. I couldn't but give Myself to that beautiful figure, and so I dedicated Myself fully. The name of Krsna also purchased Me fully. And the sweet sound from the flute - that has also drawn Me to the extreme of dedication. So how can I hope for peace in My life? It is impossible, My friends."

Radharani did not know it at that time, but the source of Krsna's flute, His name, and His beauty are one. If She could have seen how all three of these meet together, then it would have been possible for Her to have peace of mind. But it is difficult to understand this principle.

How is it that the sound of Krsna's flute, the sound of His name, and a picture of His form are nondifferent from Krsna Himself? Idealism. In Hegel's words, ideal realism. The absolute idea is not to be dismissed as an abstract thing; rather, it is the basis of all existence. Reality is there, but it is ideal realism. And the foundation of the reality of

Vrndavana is given by Nityananda, Baladeva: nitaiyer koruna habe, braje radha-krsna pabe, dharo nitai-carana du'khani.
After Bhaktivinoda Thakura describes the position of Radharani in his Saranagati, he says, "I want to serve those who have the service of Radharani in their heart. I want to serve the feet-dust of those whose only wealth is the service of Sri Radha. I want to fall before them and take the dust of their holy feet. If you cannot fix your mind in the service of Radharani, then all your attempts to serve Krsna are useless. If you cannot achieve earnestness in the service of Srimati Radharani, then all your labor for Krsna has gone to hell." We cannot conceive of a sun without heat, nor can we conceive of Godhead without His potency. So also, no conception of Krsna is possible without Srimati Radharani. We can't know any Madhava without Radha.
She is Krsna's other half - in Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's language, the predominated moiety. Devotional service as a whole is represented by Her, because both the intensity and the comprehensiveness of Her service to Krsna are unparalleled. There are so many examples of chaste and pious ladies in the ancient history of the Puranas: Saci, the faithful wife of Indra; Sati, the wife of Lord Siva; Laksmidevi, the goddess of fortune; Satyabhama, Krsna's wife in Dvaraka; Rukmini, the principle queen of Krsna in Dvaraka; and even the antagonists of Radharani, headed by Candravali. All of them represent different aspects of Radharani. They all spring from the main potency which is known as Radha.
The name Radha comes from the word aradhana: One who can serve, who can worship, who can give respect, who really loves Krsna, who can render loving service. All of these other ladies who are famous for their chastity and piety are but partial representations of Radharani. If we note the scriptures and scrutinize the position of those virtuous ladies, we'll find that the source of all their chastity and devotion is Srimati Radharani. She is the fountainhead of devotion. And so Bhaktivinoda says, "I bow down and take the dust of the holy feet of those who have as their only wealth the service of Radharani. I hanker after nothing else. " Whoever knows this and always travels on that path with a sincere heart is most fortunate.
It is the ideal that makes one great, not any material possession. One who has the highest ideal is really wealthy. The highest ideal is the most valuable thing we may possess. And less valuable things must be

eliminated if we are to concentrate our efforts and save ourselves from useless endeavor. Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to show us that highest ideal - the path of divine love. And we find divine love of Godhead in its highest intensity in His life and teachings of Srimad-Bhagavatam. The whole Srimad-Bhagavatam is meant to illustrate the ideal of divine love which reaches its highest expression in Srimati Radharani.

The Srimad-Bhagavatam sings very gloriously about the paramour relationship of Radha and Krsna. The Vedas and other Puranas are not so expressive about such confidential pastimes, yet we find a hint of the glories of Radha and Krsna in Srimad-Bhagavatam. And the Goswamis have more fully expressed Radharani's devotion in their writings. In Rupa Goswami's Padyavali, we find Her saying, "My Lord, people say that I have a bad reputation because of My connection with You. I do not feel any trouble in My heart because of this. My concern is that I could not give Myself to You completely. The people in general say that I am illicitly connected with You, but what disturbs Me is that I could not really give Myself to You. I feel that I am not fit for Your service. This is only the trouble within My heart."

And the ecstasy of divine love increases in separation. One day, when Krsna was playing with His cowherd boyfriends in the pasturing grounds of Vrndavana, Krsna suddenly felt extreme separation from Radharani. He sent His best friend Subala to Radharani, saying, "Go to My Radha and fetch Her. Without Her, I can't live. Suddenly I have so much desire for Her company that I can't stand it anymore. Somehow manage to bring Her." Subala said, "How is it possible to bring Her here in the jungle in broad daylight?" Krsna told him, "Somehow manage it!"

Subala thought, "What should I do?" Subala was very intimately connected with the family of Radharani's husband. He went to the house of Radharani and told Her girlfriends, "Krsna can't tolerate separation from Radharani any longer. He is so eager to meet Her that He is going mad. Somehow you have to arrange for Them to meet."

"How is it possible?" the gopis asked. Subala explained to them that Krsna was nearby in the jungle. They discussed between themselves what to do. Subala was a beautiful boy who resembled Radharani. So Subala took the dress of Radharani, and Radharani wore Subala's cowherd dress.

When Radharani was discovered wearing the dress of Subala, She was challenged by Her family members: "Subala! What are you doing here?" In the dress of Subala, Radharani said, "A calf is missing and its mother is mooing. So I have come here looking for that calf." So a calf was given to Radharani, and She carried that small calf on her breast into the forest. In this way, Radharani was disguised as Subala, while Subala, who had taken the dress of Radharani, remained behind in Her room.

Radharani had been given a hint of where Krsna was hiding near the forest's edge. She went to seek Him out. At last, when Radharani saw Krsna, She approached Him in the garb of Subala. Krsna was mad. He could not detect that Radharani had come, but mistook Her for Subala. He said, "Oh, Subala, you have come back without Radharani! Couldn't you bring Her?"

Radharani began cutting jokes: "No," She said, "It was impossible for me to bring Her in the daytime." Krsna said, "Then what am I to do? I can't tolerate My life any longer." Radharani said, "If You say so, I can go to Candravali and bring her." "No, no," Krsna said, "Curd cannot satisfy the thirst for milk. It is not possible!" Krsna was faint with disappointment. Then Radharani embraced Him, saying, "My Lord, can't You recognize Your maidservant? You failed to recognize Me!" Then Krsna was again full of joy.

Although the pastimes of Radha and Govinda are mentioned in the scriptures, these are all very high things. They are not ordinarily to be expressed in words, but still sometimes we are forced to speak about them because the high ideal of divine love given by Srimad-Bhagavatam is the supreme goal of life. Of course, the scholarship of Sukadeva Goswami and Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu have helped, to a certain extent, to establish the dignity of the proposal that love is above knowledge. It was admitted by everyone that Sukadeva held the highest attainment of the learned men of knowledge; he was unanimously admitted by the scholars to hold the highest position. Because of this, when Sukadeva Goswami came to inaugurate the principle that divine love is above everything else, the scholars had to take notice. Caitanya Mahaprabhu demonstrated to the scholars that His intelligence and scholarship excelled everyone else's. So when He came with the tidings of divine love, then it was easier for the ordinary men to accept it as the highest ideal and try for it.

So Vasudeva Ghosh says, yadi gaura na ha'te tabe ki haita kemane dharitam de. If Mahaprabhu had not appeared in this Kali-yuga, then how could we tolerate living? How could we sustain our lives? What He has given - the very gist of life, the very taste, the charm of life - without that, we think it is impossible for anyone to live in this world. Such a thing has been invented, discovered by Gauranga. If He had not come, then how could we live? It is impossible to live devoid of such a holy and gracious thing as divine love. Without Caitanya Mahaprabhu, how could we know that Radharani stands supreme in the world of divine love? We have received all these things from Him, and now we think that life is worth living. Otherwise to live would be suicidal.

And serving those who can serve Radharani is the way to approach Her vicinity. By serving the servants of the servants, we are assured of success in getting the grace of Krsna. If somehow one can be counted in the group of Srimati Radharani's servitors, one's future is assured.

Within the group of Radharani's servitors, we aspire to be rupanugas, followers of Sri Rupa. And the followers of Sri Rupa will have great earnestness to look after the order of Sri Rupa, as he does towards Lalita. In this way, through Rupa Goswami, our devotional service is going to the highest plane. And our highest gain is only there. Not even our connection with Radharani or Lalitadevi is the highest goal of life, but our highest aspiration is to serve in the Rupanuga-sampradaya; that means that our highest attainment is in Sri Rupa's connection.

Radha-dasyam has been said to be the highest attainment. Why? The quality and quantity of rasa that Radharani can draw from Krsna can never be found anywhere else. So if you are situated just behind Radharani, you'll be allowed to taste not only the quantity, but the highest quality of rasa.

No other person can draw such high rasa from Krsna. The fullest, highest type of quality is drawn from Krsna: He gives Himself fully and wholly and deeply. So if you are in Sri Rupa's group, then you can have a taste of that sort of rasa.

In Radharani's camp, when Krsna and Radha are enjoying very solitary pastimes in a secluded place, the grown-up sakhis can't venture to enter the room and assist Them. The young girls, the manjaris, are sent there. The leader of that young group can enter

where both Radha and Govinda are very closely connected, when even the sakhis do not venture to go for fear of causing some interruption. But Rupa and the manjaris can enter there at that time due to their young age. That sort of rasa that cannot be had even through the sakhis can be had only through the manjaris.
Bhaktivinoda Thakura prays to gain admission there. He has such a high quality of aspiration. He says rupanuga hoite sei doy. He runs to be enlisted in the group of Rupa, who can grant us that sort of prospect. And Prabhodananda Saraswati has described the prerequisite for understanding all these things:

yatha yatha gaura padaravinde
vindeta bhaktim krta punya-rasih
tatha tathotsarpati hrdy akasmat
radha padambhoja sudhambhurasih

"As much as you surrender to the lotus feet of Sri Gauranga, you'll find yourself safely situated in the service of Radha-Govinda. Don't try to approach Radha-Govinda directly; if you do, there may be some difficulty. But the lotus feet of Sri Gauranga will take you there safely." In my Sanskrit poem dedicated to Bhaktivinoda Thakura, I have explained all these points:

sri-gauranumatam svarupa-viditam rupagrajenadrtam
rupadyaih parivesitam raghu-ganair-asvaditam sevitam
jivadyair abhiraksitam suka-siva-brahmadi sammanitam
sri-radha-pada-sevanamrtam aho tad datum iso bhavan

"What was sanctioned by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu by His descent was intimately known only to Sri Svarupa Damodara Goswami. It was adored by Sanatana Goswami and served by Rupa Goswami and his followers. Raghunatha Dasa Goswami tasted that wonderful thing fully and enhanced it with his own realization. And Jiva Goswami supported and protected it by quoting the scriptures from different places. The taste of that divine truth is aspired for by Brahma, Siva, and Uddhava, who respect it as the supreme goal of life. What is this wonderful truth? Sri radha-pada-sevana: that the highest nectar of our life is the service of Srimati Radharani. This is most wonderful. O

Bhaktivinoda Thakura, you are our master. It is within your power to allow them to bestow their grace upon us. You are in a position to bestow the highest gift ever known to the world upon us all. It is at your disposal. O Bhaktivinoda Thakura, please be kind to us and grant us your mercy."

So Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, our most benevolent Lord, has come to search for His long lost servants and to give to them this highest ideal of divine love.

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